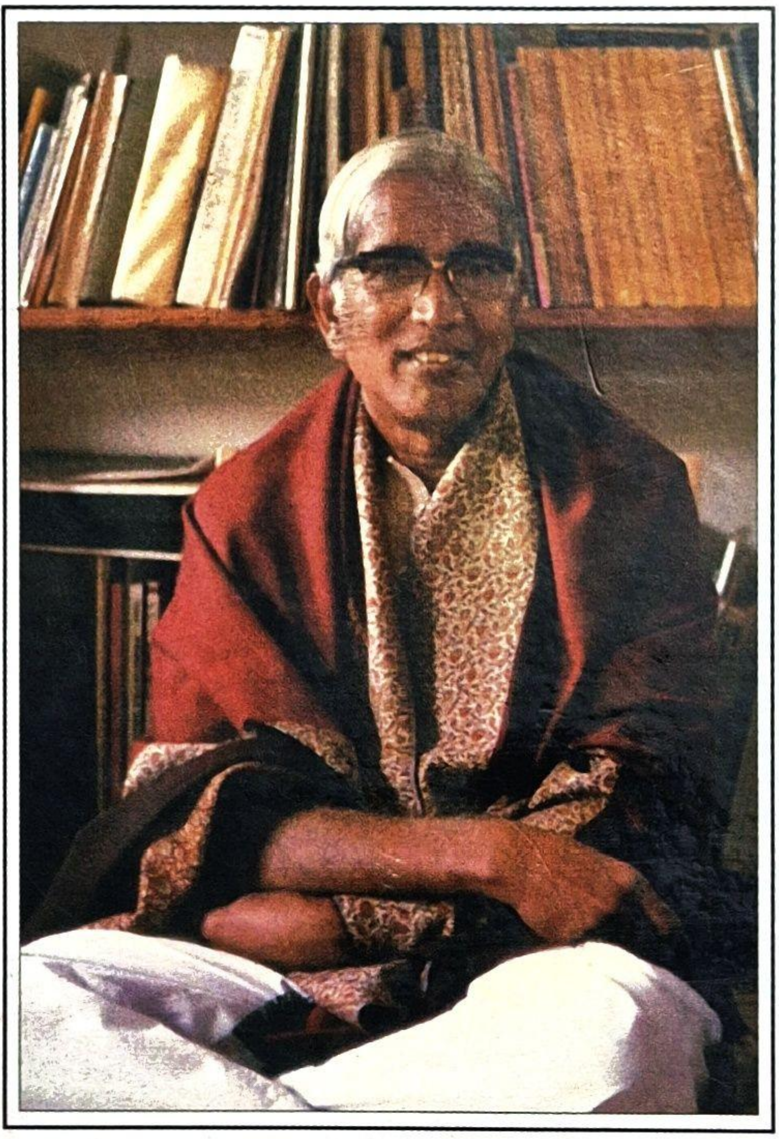

Morality & Discipline

SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION

Morality & Discipline

Chariji and Sulochana
Vorauf 1985

Morality & Discipline

Proceedings of the Seminars on Sahaj Marg held in
Vorauf, Munich, Germany
April 27 – May 4, 1985

And in Vancouver, B.C., Canada
May 24 – 27, 1985

SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION

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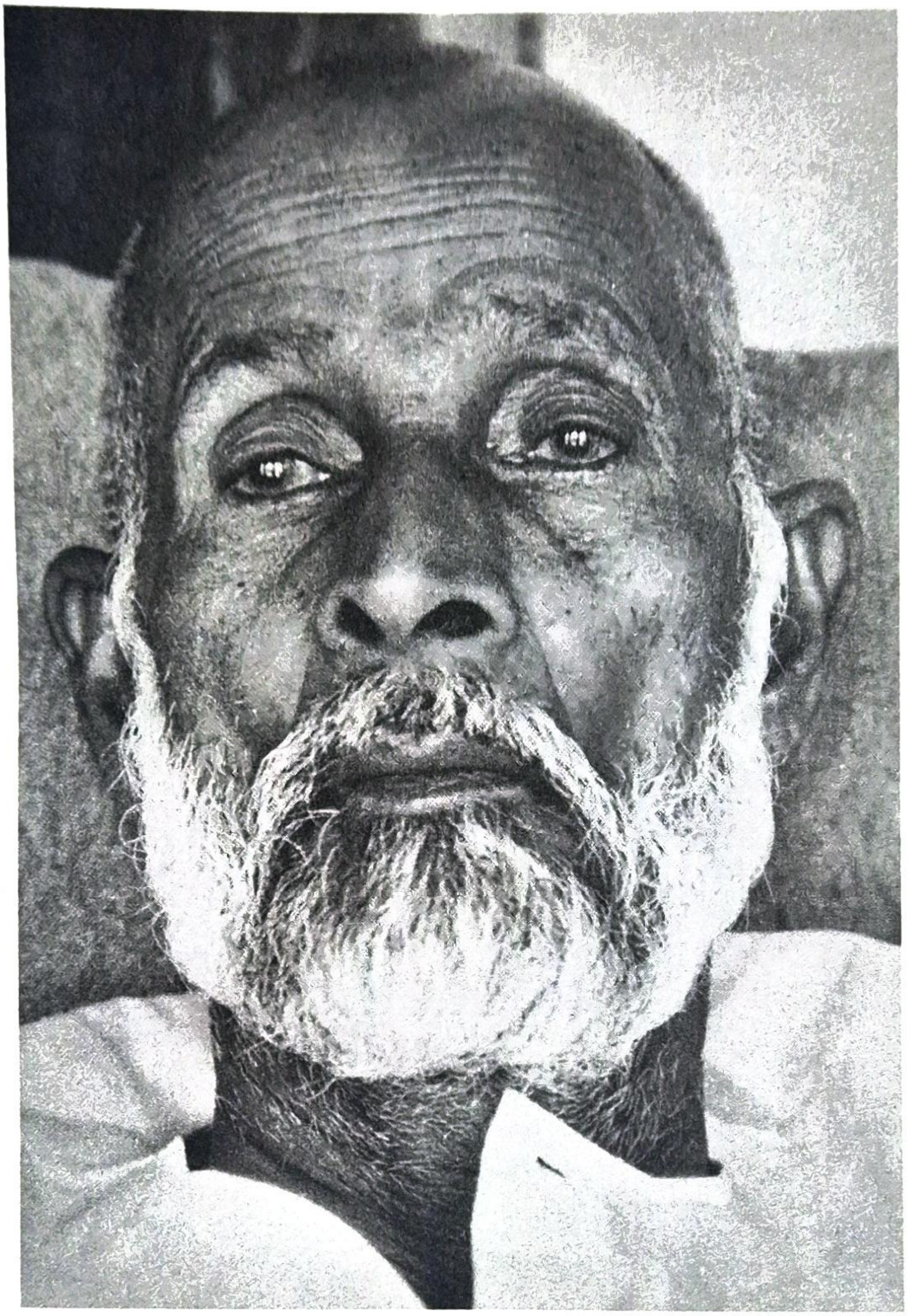
Preface

We are pleased to present the second edition of the *Proceedings of the Vorauf Seminar*, which was originally compiled in 1985 by the abhyasis of the Munich Centre. It has been re-titled *Morality & Discipline* as these topics were the subject matter of most of the talks given by Chariji and the abhyasis.

The original edition marked the first SRCM publication outside of India. Its contents reflect the time of transition after the Mahasamadhi of our Beloved Babuji Maharaj. The love and affection between Chariji in his new role as the Master and President of the Mission, and the abhyasis who had begun their practice with Babuji, is clearly evident.

The first edition was dedicated to both Babuji and Chariji with love, joy and gratitude. A dedication we wholeheartedly repeat.

The Editors



Dedicated to
our Master Shri Ram Chandra
and His Spiritual Representative
Shri P. Rajagopalachari

With love, joy and gratitude

Seminar in
Vorauf, Munich, Germany

APRIL 27 – MAY 4, 1985

Introduction

GABI OBERWINDER, MUNICH, GERMANY

IN SEPTEMBER 1984 we received news from India that Chariji was coming to visit Europe, to celebrate Master's [Babuji's] Birthday with us here in the West for the first time in the form of a European seminar. Chariji suggested the gathering should take place in Germany, this country being centrally located in Europe.

The Munich abhyasis began eagerly to search for a suitable location. Information was collected on youth hostels, sport centres, hotels, castles and monasteries, but all of these turned out to be unsuitable for such a large group of people (we had to plan on a minimum of five hundred persons).

And then one day after many vain attempts, someone in the group mentioned the word *Feriendorf* (vacation village). While looking through the Michelin Guide-book, Joelle found a first description of Vorauf.

As a small group of abhyasis drove to Vorauf for the first time on an autumn Sunday in October 1984, the vacation park presented itself in its best light: the sun was shining from a cloudless blue sky, the mountains seemed near enough to touch, and scattered over green meadows stood comfortable bungalows inviting guests to live in them. It was exactly what we had had been looking for. Now the real preparations could begin!

During the following months I often drove to Vorauf in order to make necessary arrangements for our seminar. And each time the sun was shining—not only outside in Vorauf, but also in my heart.

On Saturday, April 27th, 1985, the sky was cloudy and a cool wind was blowing. On this afternoon our seminar was to begin. The day was marked by the arrival of many abhyasis. There was a continuous stream of buses and cars to the little parking lot in front of the reception building. The abhyasis got out, greeting each other happily and began to make themselves acquainted with their accommodations and the surroundings. It was unusual and wonderful that all these people who were meeting here, although seeming to be just ordinary vacation guests, knew that they had all come for much more than that!

Chariji was supposed to arrive around noon in Vorauf, but right after breakfast in Munich he signalled to me his unspoken eagerness to be among his abhyasis as soon as possible. And so we drove earlier to Vorauf, followed by a car with French abhyasis (Paule and Guy, Jeanne and Jean Louis).

Much to my surprise, the first thing Chariji did upon arrival was to go to the little supermarket and straight away to the candy counter. I understood within the same moment, for a few Danish children came running to him and greeted him in a familiar but somewhat shy manner. Together with Sulochana and a few Indian abhyasis we began to explore the area, and more and more people joined us until we were a large group around Chariji, walking along the vacation park road. From the passing cars and buses people honked and waved, and beaming and curious faces pressed against the windows. It was a joyous reunion with Chariji for many of us. We had waited a long time for this day to arrive!

The first gathering of the approximately six hundred abhyasis took place at five o'clock in the afternoon in the large riding hall which we had converted into a meditation hall. Within my function, I welcomed them all, and above all expressed our joy at having Chariji with us. Then Hanns Gangloff pointed out the 'continuity' in Sahaj Marg, referring to the large number of abhyasis attending and on Chariji's presence as Master's spiritual representative. Already in his reply to the greeting speeches, Chariji made the motto for the following week visible to us: "The purpose of such spiritual gatherings is precisely that we meet to bring into the present what should be in the present, and that is **work, work** and **work**."

Our first gathering ended with a thirty-five minute sitting from Chariji, which was felt by many as being very special. In the flow of transmission, Chariji's arrival was clearly perceivable in our hearts.

During the night of April 27th, it snowed and the wind howled around the wooden bungalows. In the morning a thin, white layer covered the meadows and fields. Many of us were worried—the meditation hall had no heating and already the day before, the temperature had been very low in the large bare hall.

The first thing this morning was to make my way through the sleet along with Brigitte and Karl Sigl to Chariji and Sulochana's bungalow. Contrary to our apprehensions, Chariji took this matter calmly, assuring, "It's all a question of discipline and will power." The word 'discipline' was to become very important in the following days.

According to Chariji's wish, the daily morning meditations at nine o'clock were followed by lectures held by abhyasis on various Sahaj Marg topics. After several of us had spoken on discipline, Chariji took up this subject at our request. We were deeply moved how he reminded us with much love and intensity of the exemplary discipline of our Master—discipline which manifests itself only whenever difficult situations are to be overcome.

All of us who had come here for this spring gathering, sat with blankets and sleeping bags wrapped around us, wearing ski jackets and woollen hats, presenting quite a strange picture indeed. Looking around the hall, one could believe this was a Tibetan refugee camp rather than a meditation seminar in southern Germany.

Our sisters and brothers from India, many of whom had never seen snow before, set an example for accepting such a situation. Being the least accustomed to such cold weather, and having hardly any warm clothing along with them, they nevertheless gave this smiling comment, "It's all the Divine Will."

While we were all practising discipline, a few of us were busy arranging for blankets and some kind of heating for the hall. Thanks to Karl's personal connections we were able to get eighty blankets from the army, and with the help of Franz Obermaier, it was possible to install a hot air heater in the hall that same afternoon. Soon some of our Indian brothers were sitting in front of the loud heaters warming themselves up They beamed, "Sister, it's a miracle!" And that was the day before Master's Birthday.

On Tuesday, April 30th, we gathered at seven o'clock in the morning for early meditation in the hall. Many abhyasis seemed especially absorbed in themselves and in deep inner silence on this day. After the sitting Chariji spoke to us on the 'change of hearts'. The speeches that followed came deep from the heart and called upon us to participate in the love which they expressed. As we had so often experienced with Master in the past, the faces of the abhyasis gradually became more and more relaxed and began to glow after the first few days of inner work and cleaning. And thus Master's Birthday became for many a turning point. While the sky outside remained grey, our hearts became lighter.

On this afternoon we gathered again in the hall for more festive speeches, whereas the afternoon hours in general had been scheduled for individual sittings and talks. In order to end the day in togetherness, we again met after dusk to see a series of diapositives which Jean-Marie Bottequin had put together especially for this occasion as a surprise from the German group. The slides showed a large span of Master's [Babuji's] life, starting with pictures taken by Rajaji being followed by photos from Jean-Marie. Through the concentration in the pictures, Master's presence was strongly felt. Silence was in the hall.

At some time during these days we stopped looking out for a change in the weather. We forgot our desires for recreation and distraction and concentrated on that which was essential, that for which we had come. The meditation hall, whose spiritual atmosphere became more and more subtle and enveloped us each time we entered, became our place of refuge.

It was a special experience for many to be invited to Chariji and Sulochana's bungalow for a sitting or a talk or even just a cup of coffee. Often, stepping timidly over the threshold, we would then immediately be included in a warm and open family atmosphere, in which spiritual work was integrated into daily household activities in a very natural way. It was so easy to feel at home in Chariji and Sulochana's presence!

There were countless opportunities each day to develop more and more trust in Chariji's nature. There was never a situation where one could not feel the very great depth behind his reliable friendliness and warm humour. In his clear presence and loving strictness, there was no room for self-deception. An important message, which he conveyed without words, was the self-responsibility within the master-disciple relationship. It was wonderful to experience how Master's presence became more and more evident through everything which he said and did. And so we could see in him how it is when love for the Master becomes realised in a human being.

During the whole week Chariji made himself available for short meetings with the various national groups of abhyasis. Often these meetings were meant to be an opportunity for questions and closer contact for the new abhyasis. When the time came for the German group, Chariji surprisingly offered us a sitting, which made many questions superfluous.

On Thursday, May 2nd, instead of the usual lectures, Chariji spoke to us on the subject of the "Basic Practice of Sahaj Marg". For most of us, the basic principles of our system had never been presented in such a clear and precise manner. As so often, Chariji helped us to understand.

In the afternoon of the same day, enjoyable excursions took place. Those taking part were mainly our guests from India and most of the seventy children who were a part of our group and who were accompanied by their parents. The destinations were Castle Herrenchiemsee, Salzburg and the salt mines of Berchtesgaden. Apart from Chariji and Sulochana, there was one Indian abhyasi who was not enthusiastic about the excursions—Krishna from Bangalore. When approached, he smilingly explained, “Salt mine? We in our place have a gold mine!”

On Friday afternoon, May 3rd, a preceptors’ meeting was held, with more than sixty preceptors from the various European countries attending. The meeting was limited to ninety minutes, allowing time for an early afternoon meditation, since the Danish abhyasis had to leave that evening. During the meeting we discussed with Chariji a manuscript which he had prepared for the preceptors and clarified some important questions. At the end Hanns Gangloff spoke for all of us as he called upon Chariji very heartily to take care of his physical health and to not overdo himself in the face of his enormous task!

The following hour in the hall developed into a small farewell celebration. After the meditation and a short speech of thanks from Birthe in the name of all the Danish abhyasis, to our joy and surprise, Sulochana offered us to sing. The *bhajan* (devotional song) which she then sang was presented with such love and ardour that we were deeply moved, even though we could not understand the words. (And here I would like to express how important and loving Sulochana has become for us at Chariji’s side, and how much we like the cheerful and natural manner in which she meets every situation). Following Sulochana’s song, our brother Rangachari spoke in such a winning and earnest manner words of appreciation that we kept it in our hearts.

In the meantime, buses had arrived, and after a last quick meal, our Danish friends began to say farewell. Chariji had disappeared to his bungalow, but he appeared again 'by chance' just at the moment when the Danes were starting to board the buses. And just at that moment, the late afternoon sun broke through the cloudy sky for the first time in several days! As the abhyasis surrounding Chariji pointed this out to him, he said smilingly in his typical concise way, "It (the Divine) doesn't like competition." And then the buses left, but not before Chariji had reached once again into his bag of sweets. We remained standing for awhile in the fresh evening air with an intensive feeling of brotherhood. Everywhere now there was an atmosphere of relaxation and fulfilment.

On Saturday, our day of farewell, there was a clear blue sky over Vorauf, and for the first time we once again became aware of our surroundings. Already in the morning, some abhyasis went for cheerful, relaxed walks with each other or stood happily in the sun in small groups in front of the hall. For the first time we were able to move about without winter clothes and rain apparel, feeling sunny liberation—a liberation which had developed continuously within us in the previous days and which now found its expression outside as well.

After our last group morning meditation, Chariji unexpectedly presented us with a very important speech—he spoke about love for the Master, divine love. Referring to a story of Lord Krishna and his disciple Uddhava, he gave us a many-layered answer to the question of how to understand the role of the Master in relationship to the Divine. His further explanations gave us a better understanding of the necessity of a living Master and his task. For many of us, this last speech was of utmost importance. Then Hanns Gangloff thanked Helmut Zehetmayer[1] and me for our work, and turned to Chariji with very moving words of farewell.

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[1] Helmut, our secretary, stood behind all the organisational affairs during these days, and as always, he was good-humoured, ready to help and most efficient. Thanks to him and the reliable help of many abhyasis, the smooth running of our meeting was guaranteed.

Closing the seminar, I really felt the wish to express to my sisters and brothers what a great privilege it had been for me, as the host, to be so close to Chariji every day, and that I was the one who actually had been bestowed the most. At the end of my little speech I made a confession which I would like to include here as well: "Although I call him 'Chari' out of loving habit, my heart has already started to say 'Master'!"

We all left Vorauf with the joyful certainty in our hearts, that Master had secured the continuity of our path—for the present and the future.

Talks by
P. Rajagopalachari

COOTER
CLUB

Reply To Welcome Address

27 April 1985

You have all welcomed me with a very open heart. For that, my wife and I are very grateful to all of you.

In all these invitations to speak, I see a certain tendency to refer to the past, to live in the past and to live in our memories. My Master has said, "A memory, even of Reality, is only a memory. It cannot be Reality itself." And if history teaches us anything, it is only that history itself is a memory of the past. And what we have to do is to create the future by living correctly in the present.

The purpose of such spiritual gatherings is precisely that we meet to bring into the present what should be in the present, and that is work, work and work. In my understanding of the spiritual life, there is neither a place for memory nor a place for expectation of the future. This is the teaching of the Master, who said that we tend to live in the past or live in the future, but we don't live in the present.

If we wish to honour the memory of the Master, the only possible way is to live the life as he wanted us to live it, reach the goal which he wanted us to reach, by practising the method which he taught us. I pray that the next week will be full of such participating endeavours and lead us to success on the path.

My dear brother Hanns referred to the continuity, and the continuity as a continuum, as we call it in physics. May I remind you that a family is continued not by a father producing a father, but by a father producing many children.

And the presence of nearly seven hundred of us here is a proof of that continuity. The future gatherings of the children of Sahaj Marg will prove the continuity of that continuity.

Thank you.

Discipline

28 APRIL 1985

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS:
It is good that this topic of discipline is receiving so much attention. That shows that, whether we like it or not, we realise its importance in our life, in our growth, in our development. I only want to suggest certain trends of thought in which you all may think about discipline for the future, rather than give you a lecture on it. As it has been emphasised in this morning's talks, hinted in Master's literature, suggested in Lalaji's teaching, discipline is something which has to come from inside, and not be imposed from outside.

My own thoughts about discipline—I have been thinking over it for many years, because in 1972, when I was with Babuji in Waltenhofen near Kempten (at that time, most of you, brothers and sisters of Germany, were not with us; it was a very small group, most of whom have disappeared)—one morning Master was very morose and moody, and he told me—that was almost at seven o'clock in the morning, just as soon as he got up—he said, "You know, you must give a great deal of thought to discipline, because this Mission is facing problems: problems of growth, problems of administration, but most importantly problems of the development of the individual in spirituality. And the sole and only reason is indiscipline."

So this was in 1972. It was not as if Master was not aware of the need for discipline, or that he did not want to discipline us. His way was to treat us as adults and to not offer us inducements or threats to make us conform. So this problem, which has been facing the Master from 1972, on which date he gave expression to it, means that he had been thinking about it for many years before he gave expression to it. And I know that from the time of my own entry into the Mission in 1964, when there were probably three hundred members in the Mission, and in 1965 in the first Basant, when there were hardly forty-five persons in Shahjahanpur, even then there was indiscipline. So indiscipline is not a phenomenon of growth. Some people are very happy to say that when we were ten, there was discipline, but when there are thousands, there is indiscipline because of the increasing numbers. But that is a wrong way of looking at it. It is like saying when there is one car on the street, there is no accident, when there are two, there is an accident. One of you is wrong. It is very easy to have what we call discipline when there is only one person in the whole universe. Because you don't have to obey anybody else, you have your own desires, your own gratification, you can do as you choose. So, when we think of discipline in these ways, my own finding—I mean, it is for you to pursue that line of thought further and decide what is really applicable to it—my own line of reasoning indicates that there are three levels of discipline.

The first one is a level of discipline for mutual understanding, like we have grammar in language. Certain words must have certain meanings, certain words must be associated with each other in certain ways, if they are to convey the same meaning to all of us. We cannot each one have a German language for ourselves and claim independence and say, "This is my German, that is your German, this is his German," because nobody would understand each other. So mutual understanding means—not only means, it demands—that there is a structure, a common structure, and common rules formulated so that we can understand each other in our human intercourse. So that is the level of understanding.

I am only giving grammar as an example. You can think of so many other things, like the rules of the road, traffic rules, obedience of the red lights, green lights, yellow lights..., which shows a second level: not only for understanding how to move on the roads, but how to protect each other by obeying these rules. Because at that stage it is not only understanding which suffers, but we can kill each other and many others, too. So the second level of discipline is protection: protection of ourselves, protection of others. And here the protection of the others takes precedence over the protection of the self. I have to respect **your** life more than I respect my own. Therefore governments, traffic authorities, they punish. Punishment is not something of which we should be afraid, or which we should abhor.

I find repeatedly people referring to Babuji wanting to discipline us with love. What is this love which disciplines us, and yet fails? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. So if you have more concern for another person than for yourself, you have to subjugate **your** desire, **your** dominance, **your** wishes to the requirements, to the safety, to the welfare of the other person. Traffic rules, therefore, say that you shall not overtake at certain places, you shall dip your lights in the dark, so that you don't glare your headlights in the other man's eyes and lead him into an accident, you can overtake only when the road is free—things like that.

So, the first level is understanding, the second level is mutual protection: the other more than myself. These two, of course, we all understand, or if you don't understand, you intuitively perceive it.

The third level, which I don't think that many of us have yet understood, because all this talk, discussion, a certain tendency to disobey, all this very clearly indicates that we have not penetrated to the third level of discipline which, to my mind, is only related to personal growth. A discipline which we formulate for ourselves, which we obey by ourselves, not subjugated to any external authority, not in obedience to anybody else, but I obey myself, I formulate rules for myself, so that I can grow.

When a man is self-restrained and refrains from alcohol, for instance, it is his welfare he has at heart. It is not that he is obeying the government which says, "Don't drink." It is a very wrong way of looking at things to say prohibition is an imposition. That it failed does not disqualify the wisdom of the act, because in that way all religions are failures, all moral movements have been failures, our lives themselves are failures.

The failure or the success of an endeavour does not prove its rightness or wrongness. This is a typically Western idea of looking at things, that the success of a venture proves its worth. The success has nothing to do with it, the success was only a result of how well we have applied the principles, of how dedicatedly we have practised those principles, with how much truth we have continued to do it. If these things are given as premises, success has to follow. In such cases, failure is not a failure of the movement or of the truth or of the teaching, it is a failure of ourselves in that application.

So, at this third level—self-restraint! And the very word says 'self-restraint': I restrain myself, I'm not asked to restrain myself by anybody else. It is wrong to put these words into the mouth of the gurus or the saints, and hold them responsible and say, well, they ordered me to do it, so I'll do it as they suggested. When somebody says, "Thou shalt not kill," it has been worded in that way. There should have been an extension, "My dear friend, if you kill another, beware, you can be killed yourself if another one chooses to do it."

So, when we wish to develop, when we wish to grow, our inner Self dictates to us what we should do, what we should not do, and the obedience is not to somebody outside myself, it is to myself. If this is very clearly understood, there will be no rebellion against moral law, against moral authority, because the moral law is my own formulation for my own benefit; the moral authority is my inner self, telling my external superficial, rowdy self what I should do and what I should not do for my own welfare, for my own growth.

There is yet a fourth level of discipline which perhaps we have all realised without being able to give word to, without being able to give expression to, and that is the discipline of a person like my Master, who consumes himself, who gives up his life so that others may grow. He had achieved what he had achieved. He could have very well said, "Goodbye, Lalaji; goodbye, world! I'm going to my holiday home, so that I can spend the rest of my life in peace." But that level of discipline says: no more shall you think of yourself. Your comforts are meaningless, your hunger is meaningless, you don't exist any more for yourself, you exist for them. And their welfare is your welfare; their happiness is your happiness; their growth is entrusted to you. In the fulfilment of that growth is the fulfilment of your own law, is the fulfilment of the obedience of the promise you gave to Lalaji.

You see, it is very glib, and it is very easy to praise Master and sit and laugh, and weep sometimes, "how much he did for us, how much he loved us;" but if any of us have one percent of the admiration for him that we speak about when we talk about him, we should touch our hearts and ask: Am I willing to be like him? Not only in discipline, not only in teaching others, not only in sitting and giving transmission—this everyone is able to do, preceptors are able to do it, we don't need masters for that—am I willing to consume myself for the welfare of others? Babuji used to give the example of a candle as an expression of a spiritual life. He said that it consumes itself, it burns itself, it destroys itself to illuminate others!

So this, my dear sisters and brothers, is the highest level, the fourth level of discipline—that he exists only to destroy himself, he exists only to give us comfort, he exists only to give us knowledge, he exists only to teach us without a single moment of thought for himself. And if we just stop with praising him and writing about him and talking of his love and don't emulate him, it would be the most shameful treatment of the Master that you can give.

If you want to fulfil his purpose, his existence, and make of it a success, we have every one to become like him, and that means that we have to start with the first level of discipline—not in obedience to any external authority, but in obedience to our own inner voice, then proceed to the second level, go on to the third level, and when we end up at the fourth level, then we will make true Master's statement that he did not create disciples, but that he created masters.

Thank you.

Morality

29 APRIL 1985

THE DILEMMA OF EXISTENCE we all face is precisely because we don't understand the principles, but try to think or act according to each individual circumstance. It is like, you know, we have in India the rules of the road, one-way streets, but if there is no policeman, everybody goes through it. So that is a useful interpretation of rules, that when nobody sees what we are doing, we can do as we like. One of the old definitions of morality, indeed, of all behaviour is: when you are alone, behave as if you are being watched by everybody else. When we don't wish to follow this principle, you find that we have several aspects of behaviour: one for ourselves, one in public, one at home, one in the office. And to mould our understanding of morality to such situations, we create individual morality, group morality, national morality, things like that. I don't think there is anything more than one morality. We have often come across people who say, well, this is Indian morality, what about European morality? You see? It is as childish as saying we have Indian hunger and we have European hunger. So the first thing to be understood is that morality is one, applicable to all.

The second thing to be understood is that morality is free of the limitations of space and time. What I mean is that what is moral today cannot become immoral tomorrow, and what was immoral yesterday cannot become moral today. To put it briefly, we can say that morality is an **absolute**. I would like to say that wherever there is life, there must be morality.

Now the problem arises because in discussions of this sort we confine the meaning of morality to only one aspect of morality. It is a very revealing thing that whatever be our preoccupation, our questions of morality are revealed in that. I used to be always amused when people used to come and ask Master so many questions. One man would come and say, "Master, can I smoke if I'm practising meditation?" Another one would say, "Can I drink when I'm an abhyasi?" What was amusing was that each question exposed the desire behind that question! Without understanding it, we reveal our own desires by the questions we ask. For instance, a robber could very well have come and said, "Babuji, is it permitted to rob somebody's money when I'm an abhyasi?"

Now similarly we find in various social environments that the questions of morality are reflecting the desires of that society. And the preoccupation of each society with its own desires and their fulfilment have led to various moral codes being evolved in different parts of the world. That is why, as our sister Dorit pointed out, there have been various moral codes from various religions, making us think which code is right, which code is wrong, which should apply to us. So, as the questions of individuals reveal their desires, the moral codes of religions reveal the problems that those old masters of those religions faced in correcting the society under them.

So, in a sense, what those moral codes—if you study them one day—reveal to us, is not what we should do or not do, but what was to be done or not to be done by societies of the past faced by their own desires. So, in that sense, most moral codes have no value for us, because we are bewildered when we read certain things which don't apply to us. To give you a very simple example, you will find sometimes a notice in places in India: "Do not spit." So, when Europeans or Westerners first visit India, they can't understand why these notices are put up, because they never spit in public.

So, the study of other religions, of other moral codes generally has no meaning, and has very little guidance for us.

One of the great reasons why a special personality has to appear again and again, is because he has to teach us afresh what is applicable today, in today's life, in today's environment. Because what Abraham said or what Moses said or what Buddha said has ceased to be relevant today. It also means that if we stick to religions and try to follow the precepts of those religions, we are still going to fail in our spiritual pursuit. This is the importance of a spiritual aspirant having to free himself from the teachings, from the practices of the past, whether they be moral codes or religious codes or anything whatsoever.

For instance, you will find in certain religions that even though killing is forbidden, they require that you should eat meat on special festival days. There we find that religion itself introduces a duality in the concept of morality. It is as if one specific act is forbidden, but that it can be allowed if it is in a religious context. Now, simple human logic tells that what is forbidden in one context cannot be permitted in another context as far as morality is concerned. So, we have to understand that morality cannot be confined to religions or to societies, but is an absolute concept applicable to all, at all times.

Now, it is very difficult to define what morality is. I think that the simplest thing is the first precept for us: not to do anything that we don't think is right. We should not do anything which we think is not right to do. So that is number one. Now that raises the question: but suppose I think such and such thing is right, should I do it? For instance, I wish to take my neighbour's house—this is the general argument which people who don't have things advance for robbery, for crimes. The principle has to be applied that if everybody did it, would it be right? We come to the conclusion that there would be only chaos. So, what we individually think is right does not matter, it must be universally right.

Now, the third principle is: it may be right, but is it necessary? For instance, it is right to eat, but is it necessary to eat? This is not just a question of eating more or eating less. We have to apply it to all utilisation of things, of energies, of consumption. If we think in a mechanical sense, we are always thinking of the efficiency of a machine. Ideas like how many kilometres this car will give per litre of gasoline, for instance. The idea is that the less the input and the greater the output, the greater the efficiency of that particular system. The ideal, of course, is where there is no input at all and output continues to go on forever and ever. It need not be a dream, because I will tell you that there is one instance of such a system. But that human beings have been after this particular system, we know, because in the history of mechanics there has always been the idea, a dream, of producing a perpetual motion machine. So, historically, mankind has always been looking for something which would work for nothing, or for very little.

Ordinarily, when we talk of morality, we don't think of these things. But it is also morality to consume the minimum for the maximum benefit. So, morality is, at a certain level, a question of consumption, or the proper utilisation of energy. It is therefore immoral to waste money. Just because I have money, I am not permitted to waste it. It is immoral to waste food. And the same principle is applied to what you all think of morality whenever you think of it—that is the relation between the sexes. It is immoral to waste the highest energy given to man or woman, the energy of creation. I have emphasised this, because very often people ask: when people love each other, what is wrong? It is like saying: I love food, so why shouldn't I eat it? No love can be true if it is wasteful, or unnecessarily consuming things which it should not consume. In short, we can say that love cannot justify indulgence. I love heat, but I cannot take out the wood from this floor and burn it for my convenience, you see?

So, I would like to take a risk and say that **love is morality**, in this sense: that where love exists, there is no exploitation, there is no abuse either of the self or of the other, there is no indulgence. We can easily understand this when you look at a person like the Master who loves all. And suppose he has to indulge with all, what would be the situation, you see? So love has nothing to do with indulgence, nothing to do with gratification.

So, at that level, love and morality are one. Such a person is moral, such a person is love personified, and there is no difference between the two. So, it is only one who is capable of such a love, who has absolute morality as part of his existence, part of his character. In fact, you can say such a person loves because he is totally moral, and he is totally moral because he loves. In such a person we find a total conservation of energies. The principle of minimum consumption and maximum output we find automatically manifested in their lives. And whether they are expressing the lowest function of their existence or the highest function, the principle is the same.

Master always used to say that even in transmission the dosage should be exact. The principle being that because a thing is good, more of it cannot be better, and much more cannot be the best. Now this is the principle that normally governs our life. We think that because one glass of wine is good, two must be better, three must be the best. Similarly we apply it to riches, to pleasures, to enjoyments, all these things, you see. And unfortunately it takes a lifetime of material experience to tell us, to teach us, that excess is excess in whichever sphere we may exercise it. So, in that sense all excess is immorality. This principle Master once very beautifully said in a few words. He said, "Well, enough is enough. Anything more is too much."

So we come to the second principle of morality, that excess is immorality. It impinges directly on the principle of conservation. Today we find a lot of talk of conservation: conservation of forests, conservation of water resources, conservation, most importantly, of oil, you see. Human beings are beginning to discover that over-consumption ruined us, depleted our resources, and is now facing us with a cold death which astronomy has been predicting for a long time. So, we are coming by bitter experience to realise that over-consumption leads to disaster as much as under-consumption.

So, the highest morality is exact utilisation of all the faculties that are given to us. And that means that whether it is the power of the mind or the power of the body or the power of spirit, the utilisation at all levels of existence has to be exact, and for the purpose for which they were bestowed upon us. And this principle Master has put very beautifully, that we don't use a crane to pick up a needle!

So to conclude this analysis of morality, I would finally say, morality is the utilisation of each energy for the purpose for which it was given to man, to be used exactly as it should be used: no waste, no indulgence. That alone is the description of morality, the definition of morality, and we should all try to conform to it.

Now the principle of perfection also says that as we become more perfect, we become more perfect in morality, in utilisation, in everything else. The higher we go, the less we have to use. And this we have seen in our experience with the Master, that the longer the transmission, the lower the level of the work. At the highest level he had to transmit for hardly a fraction of a second. And at the highest level, I promised to tell you, there is a system in existence where the input was absolutely the minimum and the output is absolutely the maximum. That is at the level of Divine creation where with one *Kshobh* [the original stir] what began is still continuing! So, spiritual progress to the Divine level means not only spiritualisation of the self in the respect of qualities, but spiritualisation in respect of efficiency. I mean, in all spheres you see that at the highest level we behave like the Divine itself: absolutely moral, absolutely consumption-less, absolutely total efficiency in creation. So at the top, we find everything meets: divinity is the same as morality, morality is the same as spirituality, it is all one.

Thank you.

Message on the 86th Birth Anniversary of Babuji Maharaj

30 APRIL 1985

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,
I have been emphasising the aspect of change in all my last three or four speeches on such occasions. I think I can profitably add a few more thoughts in that direction today also.

In my last talk on the subject, I had suggested that change is progress, and that without change there can be no progress. I think except for the grossest individuals most people accept this. To our senses we find the only things that don't change are mineral things of the earth. Any life higher than that is subject to continuous change.

And even in the non-material world we find things changing, like the planets moving, the sun rising and setting, all of which assists us in our life. So in one sense change is life, and without change life cannot exist.

Now, we accept all these things intellectually, but few people are able to accept with the heart. We all want change in our circumstances, in our existence, but we don't want to change. In other words, we want everything around us to change, but we don't want to change ourselves.

Spirituality says, nothing can change without you yourself changing. Spirituality says further, that when you change, the universe changes with you. We know that each one of us is the centre of his or her own universe, so there is not just one universe, there are as many universes as there are people in this world.

So when we talk of changing the universe—what we really mean is to change all these universes, which is impossible. There is the possibility that each one of us can change his own individual universe. All change starts from the centre, so we have to start changing our universe from the centre of that universe, which is our own heart. That is the main reason why Sahaj Marg teaches meditation on the heart.

That is also the reason why Master did not value much education or intellectual changes, because they are at the periphery of our universe, and change there makes no sense. The same thing applies to all the other facets of our existence like material aspects, physical aspects, social aspects.

So what I am trying to suggest is that while we are all prepared for change in all these other aspects—in fact we welcome change in them—they are useless.

My personal universe cannot change one atom whether I become richer or poorer, whether I become more educated or less educated, whether I become stronger or weaker physically. But every time I have a change of heart in my heart, my universe changes to that extent. And the change is from the core outwards, so that it permeates every structure of that universe.

This is the reason why we have to accept the need for change with our hearts, accept it in our hearts, and without that, progress is impossible. That is why, in English, commonly they say that there should be a "change of heart."

We have a very beautiful example in Indian philosophy: a perfect man is supposed to be like a coconut. The outside remains the same, but the inner coconut has dried and shrunk and is free of the surroundings. You can hear it rattling inside. That is, the real coconut has become dry, desiccated, qualityless, and exists like a ball inside the shell, which is only a covering. There is a saying that it exists in its own universe, but there is no contact with that universe at all.

Similarly a spiritually perfect man—his heart is in the body but not of the body. It should not have any attachment with the body.

In the normal human being, everything we do with the body affects the heart. In the spiritual person, the body must reflect what is going on in the heart. Instead of the life of the body regulating the heart, the life of the heart must now regulate the body and the whole universe itself. This is the highest application of the principle of invertendo.

So spiritual practice must begin with the heart. The qualities of the heart must be changed. The ability of the heart to affect must be changed, that is, instead of affecting me, myself, it must affect everybody in this universe, the whole universe itself.

And all this is made possible only when we accept the need for changing from our inside and not from our outside. And the easiest way, dear sisters and brothers, is to receive the Master of the universe in your hearts and let him rule the universe from inside you rather than from outside you.

This is the message I have to give you on my Master's most auspicious birthday today.

Thank you.

Question and Answer Session

1 MAY 1985

Q: BABUJI SPOKE of the importance of suffering and pain. Could you clarify the aspect of pain? Do we have a need for pain? Should we welcome or somehow seek pain?
A: We should not make the mistake of looking for pain. You know the old ascetics in India used to sleep on a bed of nails and things like that, but that is not what Master means. The pain Master refers to is the pain of suffering, not physical pain so much as the suffering of the heart resulting from sympathy and compassion for other human beings. Master has clarified this himself when he said that there were saints in India in the past who used to pray that all the suffering of humanity should come to them. So it is a total suffering, not an individual one like your headache or your stomach ache, not like that.

The second point is that even one of the principles, maxims of Sahaj Marg—(we don't call it any more ten commandments, they are called ten maxims)—says, accept sufferings as a gift of God. The most important reason for this is that when we are happy, when we are enjoying ourselves, we don't think of God or the Master, but when we are suffering we always think of God or the Master. So constant remembrance is impossible when you are happy, healthy and contented. To amplify this there is one more reference in Lalaji's works where he says a saint has to have three qualities or three aspects of life. There must be permanent illness, there must be a certain degree of poverty, and such a person must always have critics. In the old Arabic it is called *Illat, Killat* and *Zillat*.

I used to wonder why this was necessary for a saint. When your health is a little below normal, we don't do so many things as when we are healthy. When there is a little illness, all indulgences become impossible. A slightly sick person is a sensible person. And, as I said earlier, it promotes constant remembrance.

Coming to *Killat*, which is a little poverty: when you have less money than you should have, you are expending sensibly and you are careful not to waste resources. We can see the evils of a consumption-oriented society right in front of us.

The third one that we should always have, critics, makes us look at ourselves, gives us humility, and makes us very careful in our behaviour, in our actions.

So, whereas a worldly person looks for health, wealth, good name, fame, position, the saint looks for ill health, poverty and critical attitude from all the world.

But I have to repeat the caution that we are not supposed to seek physical mortification as was done in the religious way, but to accept pain as something to do with the heart and not so much with the body.

Q: The next question is about the ego. Should we dissolve the ego? How are we to have a minimum ego and yet keep some ego so that we can live throughout life?

A: There is no question of dissolving the ego or removing it, because it is part of our existence. The ego is like the engine in a motorcar. As Master once explained very beautifully, if I say I can lift this, it is my ego which is speaking. So, if the ego did not exist we could not know what we can do or what we cannot do. In fact, we cannot know that we exist at all. It is one of my favourite statements that instead of saying *cogito, ergo sum,* we should say, I have an ego—therefore I am. Because even the statement that "I think, therefore I am," comes from the ego. So the ego is a very essential thing as long as we have to continue to exist in this body. And, like all the other faculties that we have got from nature, it has to have its place in our existence, and not more than that.

There is another thing which Babuji once said when somebody asked him about egoism. He said if you have ever passed, let us say, a medical examination and you say, "I am a doctor," it is not egoism. But if you have not passed the examination and you say you have, then it is egoism. I asked Babuji this question when he told Mrs. Grace Kimball of the USA that he could spin the universe like a top. So when you can do something and you say you can do it, there is no ego involved.

So what are the problems of egoism? It is the problem of the motorcar again. You know, when it is enough to have a twenty horsepower motorcar and you have a two hundred horsepower motorcar, there is danger every moment on the road. So we come back to the same principle that when there is just enough power, correct dosage, then there is no question of egoism, there is no question of arrogance, but if it is excessive, the manifestation is egoism. In religion there have been many ways, they have tried many ways, of controlling the ego, like practising humility, charity, things like that. But generally they have all failed except to produce superficial changes.

Hanns Gangloff: The translators are asked to make a difference between ego and egoism.

Chariji: Well, actually it is my mistake, because the question was about ego, but I started wandering to egoism because they are allied things. It is like having a stomach and feeling hunger. So if the stomach did not exist we would not feel hunger. Other examples: brain and intellect, ego and egoism. Please excuse me, I have amplified the question in order to support my answer.

Well, to come back to the question, "how to deal with the ego?" I think the only proper way is to hand it over to the Master. In the Hindu yogic literature there is a statement that the eye cannot see itself, though it can see the whole universe. Similarly we cannot deal with the ego ourselves. At the same time the ego is very necessary because it is the thing that takes us across life itself. So we hand it over with affection and devotion to the Master of the ego.

It is not a joke, it is like keeping our money in the bank—our ego should be safe but should not run away with itself—so we hand it over to the Master.

Q: The question is about transmission. Is there a difference between the inner efficacy of individual sittings and sittings at a distance? What is the optimal number of weekly sittings—maximum number and minimum number?

A: Well, in answering that question we have to differentiate between our personal effort in sadhana, and the preceptor's and the Master's work. The shortest answer is, we should do our work and leave their work to them. And our work is very clear. It is explained in the beginner's sheet: morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer, meditation on the night prayer.

As far as taking sittings from the preceptor is concerned, normally the preceptor should decide. It is for the preceptor to say—I mean, he gives group sittings and therefore it is up to him to say, "Well, you need a sitting, please come tomorrow." We should not confuse individual sittings with the preceptor with going to the dentist periodically. If we do our daily sadhana correctly and effectively, the need of going to a preceptor will get reduced with time.

As for long distance sittings, I would like to tell a story. Somebody once asked Sister Kasturi for a long distance sitting. So she wrote to the abhyasi and said, "You sit on Friday morning at six o'clock, I will transmit to you." And on Friday morning when Sister Kasturi was transmitting, the abhyasi was not sitting, he had gone somewhere else. He had forgotten all about it. So when she wrote this to him, he apologised. I would therefore prefer long distance sittings like Master used to give us. He never told us when he was doing it, but it was always effective.

I remember in 1968 or 1969, when the first European abhyasis started to come to India, there was this question of long distance sittings. They were always very anxious to find out what time it was in Europe when we were sitting in India. Even if there exists a difference in time it does not mean that transmission cannot take place. So when we think of a long distance we think of very short long distances like between Munich and Augsburg, etc. But when we talk of long distance we think of infinite distances like from one end of the universe to the other end of the universe. And it still takes no time!

So I would advise abhyasis to follow their daily schedule exactly, and leave the question of individual sittings to the preceptor. Taking too many individual sittings in one day is useless because Master said if you are regular in your sadhana, one individual sitting per month from a preceptor is enough. As for long distance sittings, it is for the preceptor to decide.

Q: What is the difference between feelings and emotions in spirituality?

A: I will give you an example from Master's life. Master was once in Madras and he was leaving for Shahjahanpur by the afternoon train. About sixty to seventy abhyasis were on the station to see him off. Many were openly weeping, and many were trying very manfully not to weep. But Master was sitting next to the window just looking straight, nothing on his face, nothing in his behaviour. I went to the Master and asked him, "Babuji, so many people are weeping because you are going, don't you have any emotions or feelings?" He said, "What I have in my heart now is feeling—what they are all having is emotion." And then he said, "Emotion in the beginning when we start sadhana is a good sign. It means that the heart is becoming softer, but it must stop with that. If it continues, it can actually harm spiritual progress." So that is all the answer I can give you on that question.

Q: What is the importance of the nine o'clock prayer?

A: The main difference is that everything else we do we do for ourselves. The nine o'clock prayer we do for the universal and spiritual well-being of all.

Q: Should we do it? I think it was said that the nine o'clock prayer was useless, that it was something to be done in the beginning and then Babuji decided to stop it.

A: Let me amplify it a little. See, there is a wisdom in trying to have the whole of humanity raised to our level. We all know well that if there is only one rich man in a place, he is the target of attack by all robbers around him. Similarly, if you have only one healthy man surrounded by sickness, he is not safe. So we have two aspects to our sadhana: one is for personal development, the other is a prayer that all should develop with me so that nobody is envious of me, that nobody casts eyes on my progress, that there is no jealousy and no selfishness.

We must all rise like that. Well, that is still a rather self-centred approach to this universal prayer.

The next approach is, "Lord, if I am to remain here, at least let them go up, because when they go up somebody can lift me up later on." Only a man who has fallen knows that there must be some people around him who can raise him up. There is still an element of self-centredness there.

The highest approach is of the saint who says, "I am prepared to be eternally here—so long as I can move people up." He is able to pray like that because for him the difference between high and low, between spiritual and non-spiritual, between heaven and hell, have all disappeared. So when we do our individual sadhana we develop spiritually day by day. When we continue with the nine o'clock prayer we bring in a certain universalism to our approach. And our own spiritual growth is matched by the change of attitude in the universal prayer from total self-centredness to partial self-centredness to complete other-centredness.

Q: Do we have to pay in a certain way every time we inflict pain on somebody? What about penance as a consequence of our action?

A: We should live in such a way that we don't harm anybody else physically, or by thought, or by anything else.

The second half of the question relates to some sort of penance. In Sahaj Marg, there is no penance, there is only repentance. And the only way of repenting is to resolve not to do the same mistake again.

Q: Marriage and the spiritual side of marriage: how do you conceive the union of a couple in a spiritual life, in other words, the spiritual side of marriage?

A: There is no such thing as a spiritual marriage. At least that is my opinion. But there can be a marriage of spiritual persons. And that makes the biggest difference to a marriage. When brutes get married, the marriage will be a brutal one. There will be nothing in it but lust and passion and violence. When spiritual persons marry, spiritually elevated persons, then that life in all aspects—not just marriage—in all aspects it will become progressively divinised.

Q: Why not recognise the value of other masters who are working on certain planes of consciousness such as Sri Aurobindo, Krishnamurti, Rajneesh, etc., or again esoteric movements such as Rosicrucians, Sufis, the White Brotherhood, or again spiritual communities without a visible master such as Findhorn, etc? All talk about a new man in a new world. I feel this is very useful and wanted for the evolution. So why declare that Sahaj Marg is the only path which is worth?

A: The question itself shows that the answer is impossible, because the questioner has forgotten the names of so many masters whom he does not know. Why should we recognise only the masters we know and not the other masters of the past and those who are yet to come in the future? It shows the impossibility of this situation, you see. There is, however, a way of doing it.

Once I asked Master, "What is the need to pray?" Then Master said, "To pray is an act of gratitude to God." Then I asked, "Why gratitude to God, why not to all the people who help us?" Master said, "Your whole lifetime would not be enough, because you ought to say, 'Thank you, potatoes; thank you, apple; thank you, honey.' So we thank all these things in the universe which help us by thanking their Creator." I would say that whoever wants to thank person by person has a narrow mind, whereas we have a universal approach to that question.

In another context, Master once said the same thing in other words. He said, "Love Him who loves all." When we love Him who loves all, when we thank Him who creates all, when we pay respect to Him who respects all, our job is over.

Q: I think it is a good thing to cultivate chastity and among other things to limit sexual intercourse in a couple. But then there is a problem. If an abhyasi has decided to take up Sahaj Marg and the partner is not involved in that quest, it can create a lot of problems. So, how can we maintain the harmony of the couple and what attitude should we adopt?

A: It is a problem to be solved by the couples themselves.

Q: Is it possible to be Christian abhyasi, to love Christ, not to leave Christianity?

A: There are only good abhyasis and bad abhyasis, no Christian abhyasis.

Q: Can you explain the concept of samskara, impression, and the concept of non-attachment with concrete examples of our daily life?

A: This has been dealt with very elaborately in our books. I would suggest that the man who asks these questions reads the lectures in *Sahaj Marg in Europe*, in *India in the West*, because it has been dealt with exhaustively.

Well, in a short way we can say that samskaras are formed by impressions which are created by a thought or an action. Master used this following example: "You look at a rose. It is beautiful because it is a creation of God. But if you look at it a second time or a third time, an impression is formed." As regards non-attachment, it is a question of regulating the mental tendencies. In Sahaj Marg we don't have the idea of non-attachment. Master's words are, "Non-attachment—Attachment."

Q: It has been noticed that babies are allowed in the hall during the group sittings. Can children of all ages receive group and individual sittings?
A: Babies are not allowed. It is a mistake to think they are. But sometimes there is no other possibility but to have them. In this case the preceptor has to mentally isolate them whilst giving the sitting.

Q: What benefit do abhyasis get by listening to speeches for hours?
A: It depends on the abhyasis. Master once said, when we were sitting in the Orly Airport in Paris, and he looked at the bar and all those beautiful bottles full of wine and whisky and brandy, "You know, they are full of all these things, but they don't get drunk. But we take a little of it and get drunk." So it depends very much on the abhyasi. You can swim up to your neck in a vat of wine and not get drunk. But you can take one ounce and you are drunk. So, what is in a lecture and what is not depends on your attitude to that lecture.

We must take a lesson from nature: a tiny seed which is the vehicle of life is protected in a big fruit. So, many wise people in the past tried to make their philosophic statements very, very short. It is called *sutra* in Sanskrit. How successful this attempt has been you will understand when today you read the three-hundred page book in order to understand the three-word *sutra*.

In listening to lectures, there are two things necessary. The first one is the discipline and the etiquette that we should sit and listen when somebody is talking. And the second one is to be alert, so that we don't miss anything that may be in it, because we don't know when even a fool will talk some wise words. So, like everything in life, a thing is to be judged not by its size or length, but by its content. And we cannot judge until we have heard a lecture fully, so we have to wait patiently.

We allow our unwillingness to listen to manifest, and conditions to be so created, that we think we can do what we like, and feel that we are disciplined.

We are all praising Master all the time. Have any of you ever imagined how much personal difficulty, physical difficulty, he had when he had to come and sit before us? If he came to Paris, it was to see you all. If he came to Munich before that, it was to be with you, to guide you and to help you. He has travelled several times to Europe at his age, and the first time he travelled, he was already seventy-two years old. So, if you are just going to praise Master and forget that he was also uncomfortable—he had to eat strange food, sleep in strange beds, put up with the most strange customs, requirements of etiquette, requirements of politeness, and yet be nice, happy, smiling, loving—you must try to understand how much tremendous inner discipline he had. There is no point in praising the Master unless you are going to try to be like him.

But we are too cold to sit and listen politely to other brothers' and sisters' talks. So, my request to you is not just to speak of discipline, but try to follow the Master whom you are praising so much. Because it is our behaviour, our attitude to others, our existence, which must really prove what we think of the Master—not just our words. The only way of discipline is by following another, not by being told, not by being ordered. It was for this the Master existed in his physical life, and if we don't take his example and become like him, his life would have been wasted.

Q: Is the Paris Declaration null and void?

A: I don't know which aspect of the Paris Declaration is referred to because it contains a lot of things. Everything done has been done, and everything that is being done is being done, and what will be done, will be done. That is the only answer.

That was the last question.

Now I come to some things I would like to say. Yesterday I saw one abhyasi with a T-shirt with the emblem of the Mission on it. I would like to say that the emblem of the Mission is a sacred thing and should be used only in that attitude. The only use of the emblem that is permitted to abhyasis is the badge issued by the Mission. I would like to request all of you to uphold the sanctity of the Mission's symbol designed by Master to maintain sanctity.

The second is a request I have to make to all of you. Because I am now thinking of creating an archives for the Mission, I am making efforts to collect all Master's letters in the original so they can be preserved for posterity. Almost all of you have received his letters. I would request you to make photocopies for yourselves and give me the originals personally, not by post. I know for many of you this will be a big sacrifice, but I request you to do it in the larger interest of the future.

The Practice of Sahaj Marg

2 MAY 1985

I SHALL EXPLAIN the basic practice of Sahaj Marg for the benefit of all. There is first the practice, second the attitudes. The practice consists of three steps: morning meditation, evening cleaning and night prayer-meditation.

Meditation means to think continuously about one thing, and we are supposed to take as the object of meditation that which we wish to achieve. And here, because we are involved in realisation, God-realisation, Self-realisation, therefore the object has to be of that nature. The goal of Sahaj Marg is an abstract goal called the Ultimate Self. Therefore we cannot have any name or form for meditation. Nor can we have even any qualities or attributes of Divinity. However, Master felt that for most people it would be impossible to meditate on the abstract. So, in Sahaj Marg, our Master has taken as the object of meditation what he thought, what he knows, what he has experienced to be the subtlest thing that we can have for meditation without making it gross or with a form or with a name, and that is divine light in the heart.

So this has to be very clearly understood: that in Sahaj Marg, the object of meditation is divine light in the heart and nothing else. And as I already told you, meditation means to think continuously of the same thing. What we do is to sit comfortably with our eyes closed, and have the thought that our heart is filled with divine light. We sit comfortably because during the period of meditation, the body should not interfere and break our meditation. In the Sahaj Marg system there is no special *asana* prescribed. Patanjali himself described *asana* as something which you can hold comfortably over a period of time. So we are allowed to choose a position in which we can comfortably sit for one hour. But we are not allowed to lie down and meditate, because if we lie down and meditate, the relaxation produced will put us to sleep. During meditation, if we have to change our position it is permitted, because the object is to be in such a situation that the body does not disturb.

Regarding the light in the heart, we are not supposed to see it or try to see any light in the heart. As Babuji Maharaj has explained, it is a mere supposition that the light is there. Now we are supposed to have this idea, or the thought, continuously for one hour. The prescribed period is one hour and not less. Nor are we supposed to meditate for more than an hour at one time. But if we have spare time, there is no harm in breaking the meditation, relaxing for ten minutes and then meditating for another hour again. After the first hour—you may break it for some time.

When we sit for meditation, we will of course have disturbing thoughts. We are taught not to attend to thoughts but to ignore them, because Master's research shows that when we attend to those thoughts, the thought takes power from us, and becomes stronger and stronger. So, when we ignore the thought we find it drops off! There may be another thought in its place, but it is treated in the same way. Master says, "Treat them as uninvited guests and they will go away." If we do this systematically and with alertness, we will find that in hardly a few months we can reach a state of thoughtlessness.

Here, it is necessary to understand that all these thoughts come from inside us, our own thoughts in the form of *samskaras*. If we attend to the thoughts when they rise, they become powerful, they multiply and they go back inside. But when we are not attending to them, we allow them to fall off, the inner store of samskara becomes exhausted quickly; that is how we reach a state of thoughtlessness during meditation. It is of course necessary to remember that thoughtlessness is not our goal.

So I think that I have dealt with the morning meditation, except to say that it should be done before sunrise as Babuji has instructed. Master has clarified that at the time when the night meets the day and the day meets the night, there is a balance in nature. And when we meditate at that point of balance in nature, it helps us very much in our progress to achieve quickly our goal. Of course, this applies to normal situations when there is a day and a night! Please don't ask me what we should do at the North Pole or the South Pole! But wherever and whenever possible, this is how it should be done.

Now we take up the second thing, which is the evening cleaning process. It is to be done when our whole day's work is over, not before that. During the day's activities and thoughts, we accumulate so many impressions. By doing the cleaning when the day's work is over, we try as far as possible to get rid of that day's impressions. So essentially the evening cleaning process is to remove the accumulation of impressions gathered during that day. The older and deeper accumulation which is more gross—they are not just impressions, they have become grossness—that has to be dealt with by the Master and the preceptors.

The way of doing your cleaning is to sit comfortably like in the morning meditation, and to imagine that the day's impressions are going out from behind in the form of smoke or vapour. Now the word 'imagine' should not be misunderstood, because it is a very active process in which we are supposed to use our will power. It is therefore a process where we use our will power to remove our own impressions. In the morning meditation there is no use of the will power, please note carefully. The cleaning process involves, very specifically, our will power.

We now come to the third thing: the prayer-meditation at night. It is a simple thing. We are advised to sit on our beds for about ten minutes, repeat the prayer a few times and meditate on the meaning of the prayer. This prayer-meditation is to be done for ten, fifteen or twenty minutes, and then you go straight to sleep. It should be the last thing we do before the day is brought to an end.

Now, coming to the use of the prayer. It is to be repeated only once before we start our morning meditation. It has no place in our evening cleaning process. It again finds a place in the night prayer-meditation when it is repeated a few times mentally. It is not to be used like we use mantras when we do meditation, to be repeated again and again throughout the day, as is done in many other systems involving mantra-repetition. Some people ask the question, "If it is so effective, what is the harm in repeating it?" Master's answer is that there can be too much even of a good thing, and repetition makes a thing grosser. So, please note, prayer once in the morning before meditation, a few times at bedtime mentally repeated, for making the meaning clear for meditation.

Now I would like to say something about the prayer too. Some people have the understanding that we are praying to God for something when we say this prayer. But if you say it properly and think over what you are saying, you will find that it contains just three statements of fact. The first line says, **"O Master! Thou art the real goal of human life."** We are merely stating a fact. Here, the word 'Master' refers to God, as Babuji himself has written in his books. Master has written very clearly, "The real Master is He and He alone." I am clarifying this because some people ask, "How can we address a man as a master or a guru as a master, when we are not addressing God in the prayer?" Masters, as Babuji explained, are the representatives of God, so there should be no difficulty about any abhyasi, from any religious background, using this prayer for this purpose. So the first line of the prayer really says, "**God! You are the real goal of human life.**" And in a sense, we are reminding ourselves of what the goal is which we are trying to achieve.

The second line of the prayer says, "**We are yet but slaves of wishes putting bar to our advancement.**" We are not asking God to remove the wishes or to change our wishes or anything like that. We are again making a statement of fact. That is, we are saying, with an attitude of humility, that we recognise that we are the problem creators ourselves. We humbly state that our wishes are putting bar to our advancement. If effectively used, this prayer will prevent us from developing wishes for the future.

The third line says, "**Thou art the only God and power to bring us up to that stage.**" Here, we recognise the fact that by our own effort, nothing is possible. We are stating to ourselves the fact that He alone can help us to take us up to that stage of existence. Again, please note that we are not asking God for any help whatsoever.

So the prayer consists of three statements where the first one puts before us the goal. The second one tells us what is the only impediment that is an impediment to our progress, namely our wishes, and the third one states that the goal, that is God Himself, has to assist us to reach Him.

You will all remember that Babuji has said: "Prayer is begging." That is the traditional way of prayer, which is begging. This prayer of our Mission has no element of begging or demanding or requesting, nothing in it. One question can be asked, which very few people have so far asked: "Why do you say, '**O Master**' and not '**O God**'?" This is my question to all of you, and I would request some of you to answer this tomorrow morning, because there is a very, very deep and very meaningful reason for it. So kindly think over it and let me have an answer tomorrow morning [see next talk].

So those three steps of Sahaj Marg practice have been gone through. Now we come to the attitudes. What are the attitudes we have to develop? Our Ten Maxims have stated this very clearly. We have to have, basically and essentially, an attitude of humanness. We have to try to maintain this attitude, recognising the fact that we may not already have it, but we are trying to develop it. I say this because Babuji has told us that we start life as animal human beings, and then we have to develop to normal human beings, and then we have to go on to Divinisation.

The greatest benefit of the meditation in the morning is that it trains us to regulate our minds. As Babuji Maharaj put it, instead of our being the slaves of our mind, we have to become the masters of our minds. So, by holding one thought in the mind during meditation, we slowly gain, progressively, more and more ability to regulate that mind. We use the mind to regulate the mind. Many people are confused as to how this is possible. But one example will make you realise that this is what we do all our lives.

If you have a dog and you want to train it, you use the dog itself to train it. Similarly, to master a horse, you have to ride it again and again and again until you have mastered that horse. In fact, I must say that the modern educational concept of training coming to us from outside has somewhat perverted our thinking on the subject. So there can be no training programme, in that sense. Any programme has to be used to train ourselves, to regulate ourselves. This is incidentally the problem with the Ten Maxims. We appreciate their value, we recognise their merit, but we don't apply them to our lives.

For our Western sisters and brothers, the first maxim is the stumbling block. But Babuji once explained that if you are not able to do the first one, it is not necessary to forget all ten. Go on to the second, go on to the third. Whichever you can do, please do it first. There is no importance, specifically, in the sequence in which we adopt them. We can start anywhere and end anywhere. It is not like a staircase that you have to climb the first step first, and then the second step after that, then the third step, and so on. It is not like that. The important thing is to start somewhere and train your will by doing something positive.

The will is strengthened every time we do something, and it is weakened every time we fail to do something that we have to do. So meditation helps us to regulate the mind, and by regulating it, ninety-five percent of our problems are solved. Meditation is therefore a process, not a goal in itself. But it is a process which helps us immensely, and therefore we do it.

Having got a certain degree of ability to regulate the mind, we have to take the aid of the cleaning process. Because of our tendencies and our habits, all these are precisely the result of samskaras in us. Unless they are cleaned off, there is no point in having a regulated mind at our disposal. The process has to be done very systematically, and with the application of our will power. It removes the basis which is formed in us in the past, and which manifests as present tendencies. Progressive regulation of the mind helps us in not forming further samskaras by gaining a certain degree of control over that mind ourselves.

Meditation and the cleaning process balance each other, support each other, for our evolution. Meditation in itself without cleaning is to my mind useless. It would be like having a powerful car bogged down in slime and mud. And cleaning, by itself, is like having a beautiful road with a car on it without any engine. There is a progressive refinement of the motive power in man, which is his mind, which produces his thoughts. And the cleaning removes all the impediments in the way of that progress.

This is to be remembered very carefully, because we will find that in the religious history of humanity, meditation has been going on from time immemorial. There is not any very great record of achievement. Because as Babuji explained, whatever be your progress in meditation, if the samskaras are not removed, they remain as seeds which can come out and flower when the appropriate environment is created for it. That is how even those who rose to very high levels have often fallen, because at that level the samskaras suddenly found an environment proper for their flowering, and they blossomed out.

The other point is that so long as the samskaras are there, if you have more power, the tendencies become more powerful. So, as Babuji explained, "If you transmit to a thief, he will become a perfect thief." So, that is the very great importance of the cleaning process in our system.

Now that is the practical aspect. What are we to do in all this?

The first responsibility is to do the practice thoroughly and systematically, regularly. Morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer-meditation, they must be done every day irrespective of whether you have sittings with preceptors or not.

The second thing is to try and develop constant remembrance, which will come in any case if the practice is systematic. Master has clarified that when constant remembrance becomes established, then meditation loses its importance. As an example, I can say it is like focusing a microscope on an object. Because cleaning removes the objects which we don't need, meditation regulates the mind and the two are put together, as one. Constant remembrance too is only a step. It is meant to develop love for the Master. As Master said, "We remember that which we love. So to create love, remember it first."

So from the base of the practice, we come to the level of the tendencies which are cleaned off, leading to constant remembrance that must now progress to a stage of love for the Master. And if and when this third stage is achieved, our work more or less is finished. Because, as Babuji explained, the beloved now begins to remember the lover. Our love knocks on His heart, and when His heart opens to our love, our work is over. And as Babuji repeated so many times, that is where spirituality really begins.

By now you will have understood that this is correct because all the rest was practice: mental practice, physical practice, mental attitudes, change of attitudes, all with the purpose of developing love for the Master. I will request you to note this carefully, because in the past there have been many systems where love was not an aspect of the yoga or the system of meditation or *tapasya*. There was no love behind it.

So if you carefully study what was the achievement of the past great people in hundreds of parts of the regions of so-called spirituality, it was only powers, ability to perform miracles, fight wars, things like that. So what they achieved was an approach to Divinity from which they asked for certain things, you see, and got those things, but they did not give love, and they did not get Divinity itself.

My Master says, if God gives you the entire universe, it is still a waste unless He comes with you. You are familiar with the various temptations. You have heard of the temptation of Christ, the temptation of Nachiketas, Yama offering something. In all these cases, they offer unlimited life, unlimited dominion over the world, only to tempt man away by gifts rather than by the Self—simply to tempt them away from themselves.

We must be very careful that we don't ask our Master for gifts of power, gifts of happiness, but we ask Him for Himself. Only love can make this possible. We all can go to our friend's house and come back with a bottle of wine or a piece of cake, but we don't go to a beloved to come back with a piece of cake. As Babuji used to say so beautifully, he used to tell people who had come to Shahjahanpur and were leaving, and were very unhappy to be going away, he used to say, "Either you remain with me or you take me away with you." But nobody does either of these two things.

So, in a relation of love between two persons, either the lover goes to the beloved or the beloved comes to the lover, only so that they can be together, not to take things away from each other.

The prayer states this very beautifully because the first line says, **"Thou art the real goal,"** which means **You** are the real goal, not your powers, not your beauty, not your riches, not even the universe, but **You** (the beloved) are the real goal.

The last line of the prayer reaffirms this very forcibly. It says, "Only the beloved can give Himself." You cannot ask a mediator to bring the beloved to you.

We can therefore put our Mission prayer in ordinary worldly language, and say:

"My beloved, you are the real goal of my life. What is standing between us are my foolish wishes and desires for your powers, your beauty, your wealth. You alone can give me yourself."

This is all that our Mission prayer says, nothing more.

I think I have given you some idea of Sahaj Marg and the proof of its realisation will be shown when we meet again and again and see brighter faces, more longing hearts and more and deeper love for the Master. I pray for the quick progress of all.

The First Line of the Prayer

3 MAY 1985

*CHARIJI'S HINT to the question: Why does the first line of the prayer say '**O Master**' and not '**O God**'?*

The function of the Ultimate was finished with the first *Kshobh*. There was an impulse, it continued the creation, and that goes on forever and ever. To govern that universe, reign over that universe, maintain that universe, to change that universe, is not any more His function.

From time to time masters come for this purpose. And since we are part of the universe, this work very much concerns us, too. One aspect of the universe, the non-material, the inanimate, sees the changes occur by itself according to certain laws (mechanical laws). When we come to the living universe, or the living aspect of the universe, the Master has to come to help us change, because no longer is change automatic.

As I referred to Him in the Madras function last year, He is essentially a Master of change. Therefore the importance of surrender, because we must allow Him to change us without resistance from our side.

The Need for Devotion

4 MAY 1985

IN ONE OF THE LAST LETTERS my dear Master wrote to me, he wrote a little about himself, a little about me, and a little about the circumstances prevailing in the Mission. In the last sentence he wrote, "I want to see the glitter in the heart of every devoted abhyasi." That was just before he left for Paris, and one of the last wishes he expressed.

So, our effort has now to be to make that come true, for which the first requirement is that we have to become devoted abhyasis, because Master specifically said in that letter, "...every **devoted** abhyasi."

This emphasises the need, the paramount need, for devotion.

As we have been discussing all these days, the practice, the constant remembrance, all that is only meant to create love for the Master. And a personal, living Master is necessary mostly to provide for us one who is Divine in the essence, human in the form, and whom we can love.

No one can love an abstract God, yet without love for God we cannot progress. We cannot even have an idea of what we have to become, to where we are to progress. It is for this reason that the Divine descends in human form again and again to present Himself as one who can be the Beloved for us.

I believe, therefore, that the Master's role in teaching the practice, providing philosophies, all these are secondary. This is also the essential difference between an avatar and a Master.

There is a beautiful story in the Bhagavad Gita. It deals with the life of Lord Krishna. Everything is over, and Lord Krishna is leaving for his divine abode. All who were with him loved him madly—especially the ladies of Brindavan, called the Gopikas, the girls. They had only to listen to his flute-playing somewhere, and they would become mad and run away, leaving everything just like that. There was immense love in their hearts, total love in their hearts. Yet Krishna called one of his disciples, called Uddhava, and told him, "These people love me madly, but they love me as a human being. I have not been able to teach them what is divine love. I am leaving you behind to teach them how to love the Divine as the Divine."

There are two important lessons in that small story.

The first is: our love for the Master must not be of the human sort. We begin with the love of a human being for a human being. Our love has to become progressively refined. As we see the Master more and more as a divine being, our love becomes a divine love for the Divine.

The second and even more important truth: Krishna, the divine avatar, could not do it himself. What God cannot do, therefore, a divinely endowed man has to do. A Master provides us a form to love. He comes with divine blessings and divine commands to transform us.

That is, he loves us with a divine love and also teaches us to transform ourselves. Similarly, we have to approach him in two ways.

We have to love him with a total love, with total obedience to his teachings and practice. The divine principle in Sahaj Marg, as far as I have understood, is that love itself must bring out our obedience. This obedience makes us grow faster and faster, refines and develops our love progressively, till we reach the goal, our destination, which is the Master who is love personified. So the individual human heart, full of hatred, lust, and selfishness, acts as the vehicle for love to join with the divine love.

Now, may I take the liberty of one word of caution. I have not heard one lecture on Sahaj Marg anywhere in the world yet, where Sahaj Marg has not been praised for not having any do's and don'ts. Sahaj Marg has no explicit do's and don'ts, it is true. It is because love implies obedience, love implies surrender, love implies conformity.

When a man and a woman get married, we don't get a set of rules, saying don't beat your wife, etc. A promise is made in church in the Christian tradition to 'love, honour, and cherish' each other because of love. They have to continue to love. Love makes us honour each other, and that makes us cherish each other, we become precious to each other. In such a situation it is not necessary to say you shall not get angry, you shall not get drunk, you shall not beat, these are not necessary.

I am saying this, as Sahaj Marg did not have to say what we should not do. The relationship between the Master and his disciple is a love relationship. Whenever we praise Sahaj Marg for not having any do's and don'ts, it is because there is a secret relief in our hearts that we are not expected to do this or not do that. And there is implied, or at least assumed that it is implied, that we are free to do as we please. I would only request you to remember that love has behind it greater obligations, greater responsibilities than anything else in the universe. I would say they are inseparable. I can go even further and say they are all one. Love is responsibility. Love is commitment. Love is all these things.

So the teaching of Sahaj Marg has two important aspects. It not only teaches us how to love, which most people think they already know, but they realise they don't know much of it in any case. That realisation comes when we realise the second aspect of love that implies a total commitment to the person loved, to his teachings, to his practice, to everything that he represents. I would like to emphasise this very strongly because there are many abhyasis who say, "I love the Master but I don't want to practise at all. Why should I practise to love him?"

So if we accept the Master, we have to accept everything or nothing. May I remind you that that is how Master accepts us? He accepts us as we are with all our faults, with all our weaknesses, with all our sickness. This means that he is willing to accept the responsibility of making us what we have to become, that awful responsibility which we must remember.

This is precisely what is lacking in most human love relationships. We are able to love each other, but not with the responsibility that it implies, not with the commitment that it implies. Therefore, the only difference between the Master's love and the merely human love is this responsibility.

Now we have to remember that when he accepts us, he accepts a tremendous responsibility which none of us can normally accept. So this is in a sense what we have to become, that we have to develop a capacity of love, that we have to develop the strength to accept the responsibility for each other. This is the minimum we expect in a marriage.

Most marriages fail, not because the love is lacking, but because the commitment and the responsibility to each other is lacking. And may I say that such a love is a selfish love. The love without a commitment to the person loved is a selfish love. So the truth, the final truth of the matter is that we have to learn to love without selfishness. And that is the divine love where the divine loves without any thought of itself. And when a person becomes capable of such love by the Master's grace and blessings, then only does universal love become possible.

Now we have love which has expectations of our beloved ones, or it is limited love, personalised love, individual love. But a love which expects nothing of anybody else whatsoever, it loves all and everything in the universe, that is universal love.

And according to Sahaj Marg that is also divine love, love for God, because we expect nothing from God Himself.

So let us all work to bring this glitter in the hearts which Master wanted, realising that life is a process of growth, and growth demands work. And what should be a continuous process of work, Nature mercifully allows us to break up into periods of work and rest. Periods of rest are not meant to be enjoyed or for pleasure, but to recoup our strength to work further.

So that brings me to the end of my talk, except to say that I look forward to meeting you all again and again, here and in India, and to see Master's wishes being fulfilled in all of you and in all the future that will bring us more and more in the thousands of abhyasis.

Thank you.

Talks and Reports
by Abhyasis

Thou Art the Real Goal

DR. HANNS GANGLOFF, MUNICH, GERMANY

BABUJI, OUR BELOVED MASTER, whose birthday is being celebrated today, has left behind many diamonds before parting from this mortal world. One of these diamonds is the prayer, used in Sahaj Marg practice as an introduction to meditation.

In the past we have seen many misunderstandings concerning this prayer, but, in the future, there should be no longer problems of that sort. The prayer, indeed, is neither a religious prayer, nor some sort of idol worship, nor anything like that. It is an attitude!

And this attitude is important, because it is helpful, both in the morning before starting meditation and in the evening before bedtime. Actually, we should always be in prayer, because, as Babuji told us, "When the world emerged into the present form, the central point was already rooted deep in all the beings. This central point rooted in all of us, being a part of the Supreme, turns our attention towards the source and in **prayer** we try to reach up to the same central point."

Today I am suggesting to you that we meditate upon this prayer in common for a few minutes and that we try to grasp the beauty and the brilliancy of this diamond!

"0 Master!" This is how the prayer starts and this is where the first questions and doubts arise in the minds of many abhyasis and newcomers. They perceive the Master as a physical being and they find it most difficult to realise that **our** Master is both physical and spiritual, living and timeless!

Here let me share with you all a very personal experience I had many years ago, when I had the privilege of staying with Babuji in his house at Shahjahanpur. It was in the evening shortly after sunset. Babuji had retired into a smaller room, where he sometimes used to sleep. He was sitting in a comfortable armchair and a few abhyasis and preceptors had gathered around him and had started asking questions, as usual.

Suddenly there was complete silence. Babuji was sitting in his chair, motionless, silent, his eyes wide open, fixed on some remote infinity. Words are almost lacking for describing what followed, but I will try it. A kind of immaterial, very subtle, but extremely charged atmosphere started spreading all over the place. I felt as if I should close my eyes and start meditation, but there was like an irresistible power forcing me again and again to keep my eyes open and to gaze at this beautiful, motionless face of our Babuji. And after a while it happened. Babuji's face, though motionless and almost deathlike, started changing slowly but steadily, like changing into another dimension. The room itself, where we were all sitting, vanished and there was only this marvellous, strange and timeless face resting within a limitless greyish universe, surrounded by millions of stars and suns and galaxies and seeming to control all and everything. There was no past, no present, no future: a perfectly balanced eternity!

I was overwhelmed and I had tears in my eyes, I believe. I cannot tell how long this experience went on. It could have been a few seconds or an eternity. Then, everything was over and returned to normal. Babuji was still there, in his armchair, as silent, as perfect as before and everybody else remained silent. My heart was almost bursting and I finally broke this silence. "What was this, Master?" I said. "I never saw this face before!" Babuji turned around to me, looked at me very affectionately and smiled silently with this unique sweet smile all of us who have had the privilege of meeting Babuji in his lifetime, have experienced. And it was as if he was telling me, "Don't worry, you will know in due course!" Nothing else happened that evening.

I am quite aware that it would be foolish to believe that what I had seen and experienced by his grace, could have been a peep into the Ultimate Reality, but there was a firm conviction in my heart that this evening Babuji, in his limitless love, had been giving to me the experience of his true eternal being in such a way as to make it understandable to my limited comprehension. In any case, from this day on, through Babuji's grace, I knew what the Master really is and what the prayer really means, when it starts by mentioning his name and when it says, **"0 Master, Thou art the real goal of human life!"**

This real goal is what Sister Kasturi so beautifully stressed in her speech delivered one year ago at Madras when she said, "It is this intangible form of the Master, this form which is deathless, that we have to know, this form which sustains and informs our meditation."

This is the goal of human life in the spiritual sense, and nothing else. There is no other goal in Sahaj Marg! Is this not worth remembering daily and every minute of this short life in the middle of an almost endless number of so-called 'goals' diverting our attention from the Supreme Master? Diverting our attention because, as the prayer goes on saying, **"We are yet but slaves of wishes."**

In his lifetime Babuji used to say, "I am not creating abhyasis, I am creating masters!" Slavery is the opposite of mastership, but as long as there are wishes, there is slavery. Mastership is achieved when slavery is bidding farewell. But what kind of slavery is this? This slavery, **"putting bar to our advancement,"** as the prayer says.

I give you an example. All of you want peace and happiness. The whole world is craving for happiness and peace. Happiness, of course, is not possible without peace. Peace is not possible without love. Love is not possible as long as there is hatred. One of the German preceptors once asked Babuji, "Master, what is love?" and Master replied, "Remove hatred and what remains is love." But this is precisely the difficulty: how can we remove hatred, this deep-rooted offspring of human aggressiveness?

From the very beginning of this century the Western world has tried its best—with psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, behavioural psychology, social sciences, etc.—to create a human being capable of handling its aggressiveness, its hatred in the service of understanding, of love, of co-operation, of social behaviour and of a better world. The results are poor and the practical consequences in all fields of life are depressing. Even when an artificial change of so-called human behaviour is achieved on the surface and with a lot of good will, aggressiveness, hatred and all its many behavioural correlates are bound to break out again and again, as long as aggressiveness is not torn out by the root from the subconscious depth of our being!

But let us assume, even **that** has been achieved. Hatred has been removed, love is firmly established and has become a crucial factor within social life and behaviour, within human interrelationship! Peace is no longer a mere illusion but a feasible reality and happiness is the result, happiness in a new paradise!

Even then, something rather unpleasant is bound to make its appearance. It is the **fear to lose** happiness and peace! And back we are in the old world of unhappiness, insecurity, distrust, hatred and aggressiveness! An endless vicious circle! Endless, because its propelling power is selfishness! Whenever by accident peace and happiness and love are achieved in this world of ours, what remains is always selfishness! Selfishness is the crucial factor creating any number of wishes, any number of goals, such as wealth, power, self-elevation, self-glorification, and—last, not least—the urge **to be loved**—not to love, but to be loved, not to give but to take love, this most powerful and most frustrating of all wishes and goals! Because almost everything else is easier to get in this poor world, in this world where in most cases the words "I love you" are but a surrogate for the silent statement, "I want you for the satisfaction of my egoism," where the human nature is asking for love incessantly, but has lost the faculty to give love. What is the result? Discord, jealousy, intrigues, cruelties, confusion and **hatred** again, lack of co-operation, lack of understanding, lack of tolerance, of discipline and good will!

Let us keep these things in mind and think about it once in a while, and try to assess what is still true for ourselves and to which extent our Sahaj Marg practice has been able to create positive changes! There is nothing more difficult than unconditional sincerity towards the own self! Incidentally, the Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg, also given to us by Babuji, are an excellent and very helpful 'check-list' for this purpose.

At least we can see clearly and understand now the kind of slavery which is ours: the slavery created by the many vicious circles impelled by human selfishness, thus **"putting bar to our (spiritual) advancement."**

At this point, I think, it becomes evident that there can only be one solution to all this, one way to freedom from slavery—and this is a slow but steady dissolution of selfishness itself and of egoism!

But how can a human being ever achieve such a task? Under normal circumstances it is impossible, because dissolution of selfishness and egoism means dissolving all our own 'creations,' all our samskaras and achieving our own *pralaya*, as Babuji used to say, that is, dissolution which leads to merging with our origin, merging with the Divine!

Nevertheless, our Master came into this world, lived in this world, and suffered in this world, to tell us and to show us that all this is possible, even in one life. Merging into the Divine is possible by merging into one who has realised identity with the Divine, in other words merging with a real Master, who thus—very logically—must become the real and only goal of human life, because, as the prayer says, He—the Master—is "the only God and power to brings us up to that stage!" Because it is **His** godly **grace** and the transmission of **His** power, the practice of *pranahuti*, brought back to humanity by Babuji, which alone makes spiritual advancement possible. Through **Him** the impossible becomes possible! This is our Master's promise. This is the sparkling brilliancy of this diamond called **prayer**. This is what makes the Sahaj Marg prayer an attitude, a program and a unique message!

However, before coming to the end, there is one very essential point to be stressed, because it is subject to endless misunderstandings! The prayer says, that the power of the Divine Master **can** bring us up to his own Divine stage, **but** it never says that it shall or that it **has to** do it! Here let me quote my brother Chariji, who, speaking about the right to spiritual development and to realisation in a recent speech entitled 'Balanced Existence' very precisely stressed, "You will get what **He** wishes you to get! ... It is Babuji's grace. It is **only** grace."

But why, then will be the question, undergo this tedious routine of daily prayer, meditation and cleaning? The answer is: because it makes us deserving for grace! But grace only Master can give it—to whomever he wants. On the other side, grace can be received by the abhyasi only if he does **his** duty, that is, if he plays his own very essential role in this Divine pursuit called Sahaj Marg. And this does not only mean: prayer, meditation and cleaning! It also means cultivation of non-attachment, constant remembrance, faith, devotion and finally surrender! This is not specified in the prayer itself, but is very clearly stressed in Babuji's books and sayings. "**You** do your duty and I will do **mine.**" This is **his** message and **his** promise.

My dear brothers and sisters! It is a reason for joy, happiness and gratitude that, hardly two years after our beloved Master, Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur, left his physical form, we have the privilege of meeting in this place at the bottom of the Bavarian Alps with **his** representative, with dear Chariji, who—by Babuji's will—has now taken over the living Master's duties with a maximum of devotion and dedication!

Similarly, let **us** do **our** duties—within our limitations, of course—but with simplicity, with true humility and with love for the Ultimate!

Let us stop—especially in the West—taking Master's Mission as a playground for self-satisfaction, for self-importance, for self-protection against anxieties of all kinds. Let us stop misusing the Mission as a marketplace for gossiping and for exchanging friendships and what have you! All this is nothing negative, of course, and I am not criticising here, but just mentioning a few facts we may want to take into consideration as individuals in order to make Master's work easier!

Let us try hard to come to that point where our life has but **one goal**—the **divine** goal, as the prayer tells us—and where we are able to fix that goal forever!

Then, Sahaj Marg will remain what the Divine Master wants it to be—a tool for the transformation of man and for the **change** to come.

Extracts From Letters

BIRTHE HAUGAARD, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

DEAR MASTER, DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

My speech is extracts from letters written by His Holiness Shri Ram Chandraji, our beloved Babuji, to me, Birthe, in Denmark, during the years 1969-1975.

When I received your letter, I began to dream of ancient India, when the civilisation, as the historians say, was in offing. But what were those days? For that I shall express a little.

The necessities of life were a few. They were happy in their own ways giving vent to their moderation in all their work, but thinking of the Highest. Happiness was there since the desire for outward life was not there.

If somebody peeps into this subject, he will surely be attracted to the source, which was in a way manifest in all their actions.

Comforts in modern life have developed very much, but discomfort also arose side by side with the result that everybody wants peace, which they have lost owing to unnatural ways of life.

We have lost our naturalness, which we have to restore, and it is the Sahaj Marg system, which can restore in us the original condition.

Meditation is something waiting for our originality, and transmission is the central force which is giving that thing.

◆

It is not a fact that an Indian can rise spiritually better than an European. Everybody who has inclination towards Divinity is fit for spirituality.

◆

When anybody gives me his spiritual responsibility, I feel that I should see him all happy—worldly and spiritually.

◆

People can also ask you: what is spirituality? Spirituality is to come in contact with the Divine and grow in it.

There are so many explanations given by different saints and my definition is so short. I am giving you the idea of spirituality which we are deeply concerned with.

◆

Transmission is divine energy used for transformation of man.

◆

It sometimes happens that the abhyasi does not feel the force of transmission, but it affects. There are so many causes. One of them is that sometimes he is attracted towards grossness subconsciously. The other cause is that when he gets the powerful transmission from the preceptor, his hunger is satisfied. The third cause is that the impressions of the past leave the field and begin to hover over the heart in order to bid farewell.

In this case the preceptor should clean the heart of the abhyasi, i.e., he/she should draw out from the heart the complex so formed.

There are some other causes as well, but I have mentioned the chief ones above.

◆

In one of your letters you have said that you had the rush of thoughts. They might have been reduced by now. The thoughts generally rise for the sake of fall. The impressions of the past are cleared which help in growth quickly.

◆

I am happy that your interest for the work is developing day-by-day. Now you are doing good to yourself and the humanity at large. If anybody can draw a man up to peace and reality, then he is rendering wonderful service to him.

Everybody wants peace, especially in Europe, because they are always engrossed in one thing—materialism. They have no other thing in view better than this. Their purpose of life—excuse me—is to maintain life itself with pleasure and they seek sweet water in the ocean which is saltish.

Of course it is not their fault, because nothing better than that has been introduced to them. Now India has begun to call for peace under the pressure of economic development.

I remember the days of my abhyas (practice) when I used to go to my Master, none of his disciples asked for peace, but the Ultimate Reality.

Now here when the people come to me, they ask for peace first and then Realisation.

In modern days peace has become the call of times and Reality the call of past. All of us should try to gain the object of life and also be attentive to the world, side by side. Both the lines should run parallel, equally glittering.

In short, we should fly with both wings.

◆

But if anybody wants the changeless state he will have to proceed with restlessness and that is the price for it.

You will be surprised that I am using the word restlessness which nobody will like, because all people desire peace. So I must clarify that word. It has the sense of strong craving for Reality.

In love, a man thinks of his beloved when he is far off, so restlessness is there and gratification is also there along with it.

His liking develops. He tastes it and that is a practical approach.

Please do not bother yourself about egoism. It is my duty to set you free from that.

When mind is regulated every faculty takes its natural trend. Here in Sahaj Marg it starts from the very first day if the abhyasi is an earnest seeker.

◆

That one who has love, devotion and surrender wins the race.

◆

Do not try for surrender, because it is the result of your abhyas and devotion. If you try for surrender, it means that 'doer' is there, the feeling of which is a part of egoism.

How the surrender develops is another question. I repeat it again, that when a person begins to think of dependency on Master and devotion alongside, surrender develops.

◆

It is really a very easy path, but is has been made difficult by the ignorant.

◆

For this work there must be a group of persons devoted to the Mission, and if each of them plays his part, the task will be easy.

The bell rings and the sound is heard at a distance also. So first of all please ring the bell so that the sound may be heard in wide space.

◆

Twenty years back I have said that this same system will be the basis of training in the whole world, and if you want to bring that stage soon, be united for the common cause.

◆

The beauty if adorned by Beauty itself, it becomes a real beauty. If anyhow beauty is merged in Beauty it takes to its real nature.

◆

The West has been given the direction for economic development and scientific exploration, and the East has been given direction for the Realisation alone. East is wanting in the other direction, which the Westerners have.

The unity of East and West will bring the real state in this respect to mankind.

◆

My view about the creation of the world is scientific. That is correct because they are based on my 'anubhav' (direct inner experiences)—of course, I have not expressed anything about the animal kingdom in my books purposely for the reason that they will not serve the purpose I stand striving for. Now you want my views about it, therefore, I am writing; please think it over.

When energy came down from the Centre it turned into showers and there is reason for that also.

The showers which crossed a short distance were more potential. The perpendicular distance is the shortest line from the Base.

So nearer to the Centre, humanity was formed and brought in its share of wisdom, intelligence, shape and colour. The line which traversed the longer distance and was far away from the centre gave birth to the animal kingdom.

The shape was rough and intelligence poor. Small species were also formed in the far far away from the base. I have read Darwin's theory of evolution. It is very interesting, no doubt he has given a new thought to the world of thinkers. But I have so many points of disagreement with the theory which if I begin to discuss will make this letter very long. For your interest I may tell you that Hindu mythology tells us that an animal evolves and becomes human being after so many deaths and births, and human beings also devolve and become animal and lower species.

If I begin to prove that man can become animal and animal can become man, this letter will become a booklet. Leaving this aside, I am coming to a purposeful point, i.e., unravelling the knots or granthis.

The granthis or knots have energy within. But energy is immersed in matter, or in other words, they have become like a cocoon.

In Sahaj Marg System energy remains predominant and matter gets aside. So there is no question of one passing through devolution.

In this system the energy becomes pure and original. We can utilise that force for the constructive as well as destructive work. But it is vow for the saints in India that they never utilise it for destruction unless ordered by the Divinity.

The energy itself in the long run returns to the Absolute—the cause of the power. The whole matter—every particle of the body becomes energy and then goes to its absolute.

Einstein only knew the method to convert mass into energy and beyond it. In short, I can say that energy can also be converted into mass, and this is a very easy job.

◆

I have despatched to you a book, *Commentary on Ten Commandments of Sahaj Marg*[2].

In this book dynamical relations between man and God have been discussed. The first two commentaries are difficult, so if you read it from the end to the beginning, you will find it easy to understand the subject.

◆

As you grow you will understand Sahaj Marg more and more.

◆

As you grow you will feel yourself very light and subtle. You feel at times, if not all the time that I am with you, that is correct. It is the sign of love and the effect of absorbency, how much little it may be.

◆

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[2] This book's title has been changed to *Commentary on the Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg*.

I am so happy that by the grace of the Master, I could prepare you so well for the work of the Mission, but this is not the end.

You have to proceed on and on till you absorb in Divinity—the chief object of life.

Nothing is difficult in the way provided an abhyasi has craving for it and is thoroughly devoted.

◆

The difficulty with me almost everywhere is that people want to be intellectually satisfied first, and then they think of following the Method. This is their luxurious way of thinking.

The taste of Reality one can feel when he becomes tasteless. There, intellect and wisdom are all merged in Divine.

The intellectual earnings are left in the books and writings, and the people enjoy it when they read, while the spiritual earnings strike at the root.

◆

The people desire for God but do not want Him. Thinking God on the throne, they think is enough for them. Their spirituality ends in this alone.

The talk of greatness cannot make a man great. It is the action that brings glory to humanity.

◆

Blessed are those who even have a glimpse of Divinity even momentarily.

In our system even higher things sometimes come even in the lower stages.

That means nature is fomenting one with the fire and devotion that never burns the fingers.

Cold and heat are almost the same, but with little difference. The lower part of it is heat, because weightless weight is there above it.

If both are naturalised, that is the real realisation. So only remove the weight, then you will find no density. Air is dense when it is touching the earthly substance. If that touching is gone off you will feel equality in all matters with details.

The saints of India have talked much to force renunciation, but the idea has become so old that the people do not understand it and rather fear. But please think it over.

Is it not the thing to be grasped?

I have never preached renunciation because it is automatically the result of our practice, it comes even without the knowledge of the abhyasi.

◆

We should help each other whether higher or low. I really wish and you too that the humanity may develop to have a better world of ours.

I love you all.

With the best wishes for Higher Evolution.

Yours affectionately,
Ram Chandra

And Babuji's love for all of us was so great that when he left this world, he had appointed his worthy successor, Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, to become our beloved Master.

Thank you.

In the Service of the Master

PATRICK FLEURY, TOULON, FRANCE

OUT OF LOVE AND DEVOTION, we want to serve the Master. In order to do so, we wish to become preceptor; then, in order to serve him even better, full preceptor, then senior preceptor, then... It is a dead end.

It is by surrendering to him that we serve him best. Only the Master has the real consciousness of the goal of the Mission and of its evolution along with the times. The Mission is his body; let us leave him the care of determining our place. We should not be a nose wishing to become a hand, or a left hand wishing to be a right one.

Let us love him without caring about being a cell from the head or from the hand, an atom from here or from there.

He carries all of us within him, in his journey towards infinity.

Goal Achievement

STELLA JAQUEROD, ETOY, SWITZERLAND

THE FIRST TIME I went to see Master in Shahjahanpur the Ashram was just being built, and I had the joy and privilege of staying with him in his house. The second time I went to see Master, the Ashram was finished and all the abhyasis had to stay there from then on.

I must admit that, strictly on the human level, I had quite a lot of trouble getting used to the new system, and bitterly regretted what I nostalgically call 'the good old days.' What particularly bothered me in the beginning was the distance between the Ashram and Master's house—three kilometres. I had come so far to be with Master and three ridiculous kilometres separated me from him. The fact that the Ashram was highly charged with a beautiful spiritual atmosphere didn't console me at all. I was yearning to be with him and him alone.

Then the thought came to me that the situation I was living was a perfect illustration of what it must feel like to fall short of one's goal. We come from so far down, and with Master's help work our way painstakingly upwards, little by little, day after day. Nevertheless, no matter how far we go, no matter how near we get, if we are not with God, one with Him, merged in Him, then the pain must be exactly the same.

This is the lesson I learnt on that occasion, I just wanted to share it with you.

The saying goes that when the disciple is ready, the Master is there. When Master came into my life I accepted him unquestioningly and wholeheartedly, never thinking that I would be worthy of having a Master. The loving care bestowed by Master on each and every one of his disciples is enough to inspire confidence to even the most exacting person. His work was exemplary and his life was exemplary.

Before leaving his physical form Master appointed a successor. Having no reason to doubt the soundness of his judgement, I should like to express my gratitude to our dear brother Chariji for having taken up the burden of leading us all back to spiritual health and to offer him my unquestioning and wholehearted acceptance.

The Empty Chair

TONI BERNARDI, ROME, ITALY

IT WAS THE BEGINNING of November 1981. I was going to Shahjahanpur for the fifth time, but this time things seemed to be more difficult than ever.

We had disembarked in Bombay—Anna Maria and myself—and from there it took us five days to get to Shahjahanpur. This happened because, in order to save time, we had bought in Italy the air ticket Bombay-Delhi-Lucknow, not thinking that confirmations had to be made in India. In Bombay all the planes to Delhi were full, and we lost three days before we could get two seats to Delhi. The same thing happened again in Delhi, so finally we decided to go by train. I loved that route anyhow. The dear old Shahjahanpur, shocking and sublime at the same time, was shining like a jewel to my heart. I loved every single stone of that place. I remember how the year before, while in Bali and in the Maldives, my heart was crying for Shahjahanpur and longing for the time I would be there.

When we arrived at the Ashram the place was full of abhyasis, both Indians and Westerners. There was a group of people who was about to leave without having been able to see Master at all. Every day Master meant to come, but when the time came and everybody was expecting him, a telephone call advised that Master was not feeling well enough to come to the Ashram. This we were told when we arrived at the Ashram.

I was feeling very sad, though the atmosphere in the Ashram was so charged that Master's presence could be felt everywhere. I could have spent the rest of my life there. Asking for nothing.

A few hours after our arrival someone came to look for us, saying that Master wanted to see the 'two from Italy.' My heart melted. Immediately we managed to get a rickshaw and went to Master's house. The countryside was beautiful in the cool morning air. The houses, the river, the people, the buffaloes added their rich colour to the shining green of the cultures and trees.

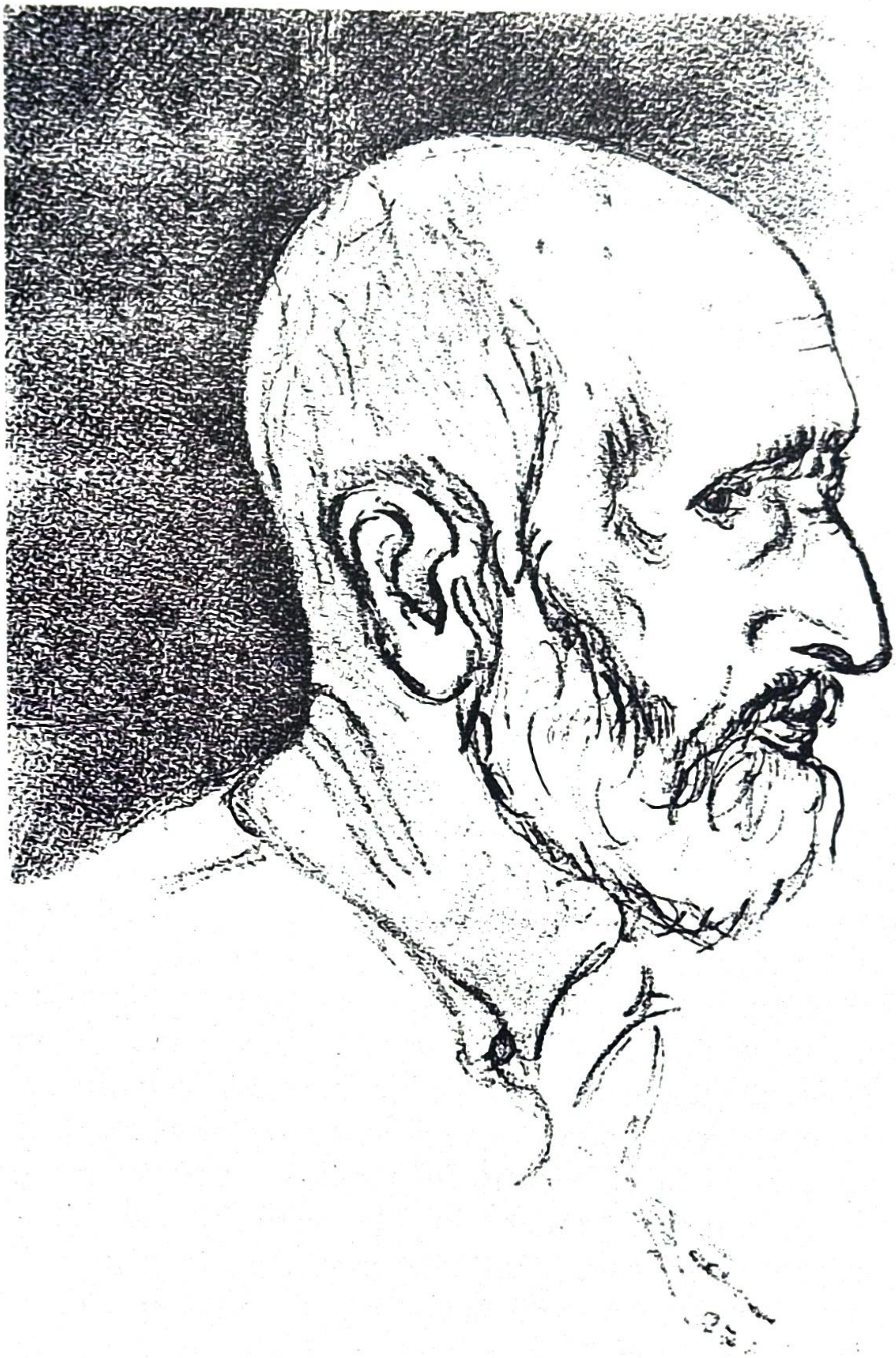
When we reached Master's place, he was sitting there, in his usual place under the porch! He smiled at us, and before I could say anything he said, "I am no more fit to travel abroad." I wanted to embrace him and kiss him, but I was just standing there with my hands joined in the Indian style while tears were running down my cheeks. With a small voice I asked him whether he remembered me. "Yes," he said—with that sweet smile of his—"you are Toni from Italy." I was so happy that he remembered me that more tears were running down my face. He told us to sit down. I sat in that chair just in front of him and Anna Maria sat next to me. We were silent. We sat silently in the immense bliss which could only be experienced in his presence. We were the only people there except for an abhyasi of the place.

After a while Master got up, with the help of that abhyasi, and slowly walked to the other side of the compound, showing a great interest in the flowers behind the well. We followed him with our eyes, turning our necks as much as we could, so as not to lose sight of him. He kept on conversing in Hindi about the flowers, touching them here and there, and after a while he sat down there in the sun, apparently forgetting all about us.

Anna Maria and myself glanced at each other, wondering when would he be coming back to his seat. Why had Babuji to go and look at the flowers just when we were there? He himself had asked us to come. As all this mumbling was going on inside of me, I felt a strange force which made my head turn back towards Master's empty chair. It was a kind of attraction, a subtle force which, try as I would, I could not resist, though I wished to keep on looking at Babuji as he was sitting and talking at the other side of the compound. Slowly but steadily my head was resuming its original position facing Master's empty chair, and there was nothing else I could do. In that moment I realised that that chair was not empty at all, because a tremendous transmitting power was emanating from it. I did not know whether Anna Maria was feeling the same, but I myself was forced to close my eyes in a deep absorption. I do not know how long it lasted. These experiences cannot be measured by our values of time and space. When I opened my eyes, still under the influence of that wonderful transmission, Babuji was coming back. He sat down in his chair. After awhile he said, "You better go now, it is time for your lunch."

We took our rickshaw back to the Ashram.

In the blissful condition I was in, I remembered Birthe's words years ago when she had told me, "Sometimes Master while transmitting gets up and walks away, leaving his astral body there to do the work."



Days Are Passing By ...

BERNADETTE BOMHOF, AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

DAYS ARE PASSING BY, months, years flying by without a break! There is a constant flow and unceasing change in Nature. To be able to perceive this change, Nature's course, one has to be alert and attentive. To be alert means being able to set ourselves aside with all our prejudices and ideas, and let Him come within our hearts, within ourselves! It means that we offer him a chance to effect the change in us as he pleases it to do.

We, unfortunately, very often interfere in his play. We want peace; we want what belongs to our brother or sister. In other words we have no confidence in him, no trust that what is given to us is what we need at that particular moment. We do not realise that by wanting anything besides him we restrain him from offering himself to us. It is so important to always let him settle inside, instead of letting our own creation rob him of his place. We all know too well what we are doing to ourselves. And what is he doing to us? Maybe we will never really fully know the greatness of his kindness, his love for us. His love is so perfect, so pure, love without restrictions.

He loves all and I feel it is my duty to at least be attentive to that love, then it will be there, in full swing, but when, as Master so beautifully said, "Only when you are not there." Where am I then? I have, with his grace, lost myself within him. As days, months and years went on, I, slowly with his help, have offered myself to him. Trusted him; believed in his greatness; and finally loved him. Even that love he purifies so that I may resemble him more and more.

There are many dangers hiding in all corners, teasing us and testing our strength. Being alert is very important in these moments so that we may overcome all obstacles as a winner, not as a loser. He is always a winner, and for the one who has given his heart to the Master, it means the end of miseries. He possesses all powers and nothing can withstand him.

Our mind is very cheating and therefore, sometimes after many years of abhyas, it will again try us out and maybe win the game. This is due to lack of alertness. But of course, once we understand that everything emanates from Him and has to go back to Him anyway in the long run, why should we doubt, or drop off on the way? Lose time and gain a lot of impressions! What a foolishness! We understand then that he is the only one who can carry us through life, through high and low.

To be alert is being in his remembrance, trying to understand his play within us and make room for him to settle within our hearts. All things are so interrelated with each other, as such when the first step has been made, the next one will automatically follow. Only willingness is needed. Finally love for him will radiate and burn everything down to ashes.

Master can reflect only himself, therefore he loves all without preferences and we, on our part are reflecting ourselves within him, and therefore lack seeing him in all his magnificence. What a blunder!

O my dear Lord, at last I would like to say that I love you as much as I can, poor love indeed, but it is all I have, and more I cannot do for the time being. And I know that once, with your help, as days, months and years pass by, my love for you may match your love for me. Amen!

Discipline

THOMAS MOGENSEN, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK about discipline, though the very word—discipline—is something that most of us don't like at all. Why is it so?

Why is it, that when the talk is of discipline, everybody enters the discussion with very agitated minds and hearts?

Why is it, that the atmosphere soon becomes that of a battlefield, rather than of a relaxed conversation?

Why is it, that we have so many good reasons not to be disciplined?

I think it is only because we don't know what discipline really is.

We don't know what it consists of, we don't know what it aims at, and we don't know what it could bring about in our lives—for our good and benefit.

In short—we don't know what we are talking about. And what we don't know creates fear—fear of the unknown—and fear creates opposition.

Through our lives we have been confronted with discipline, in one way or the other. Most of our time from birth till death is spent being disciplined. As children we are disciplined to know how to behave when we grow up. Disciplined through our education. Disciplined to die in wars, disciplined to become good mothers.

Discipline! Discipline! Discipline!

There is hardly one day where we are not expected to be disciplined.

No wonder that opposition can arise from that reason alone. And it is obvious that the ways of bringing discipline about are often wrong.

As children we are scolded, robbed of our weekly candy bar, maybe even beaten, if we are doing something wrong.

In the school it goes on—maybe only with a few refined additions—to make us even more disciplined. No wonder that we might create hate against discipline—forgetting in the process that it is really the ways of bringing it about that are wrong, not discipline itself. And none of the ones who spend time in disciplining us, really knows what it is. Forcing something regarded as discipline upon us from a life and heart, which is as undisciplined as we also remain.

So discipline itself gets lost in the process of forcing us to behave in certain ways, which have nothing to do with discipline, touching at most the surface of it.

Punishment and the fear of being punished are the tools for bringing about this odd form of discipline: "If you don't do as I say, you will have beating." "If you don't follow the commands of God, you will go to hell."

The Western society is based on Christianity. For almost two thousand years it has been our foundation. Though many of us think we have done away with religion, I believe we are still very much influenced by Christianity. I don't say this to abuse the principle of Christianity—they are all as they are. I say it because through these principles runs a stream of prohibitions.

It is natural that one is not supposed to steal or kill, etc. But, as we are only told what **not** to do, and not what to do, they become pregnant with guilt. What shall the poor Christian soul do, when he cannot help breaking one or more of these principles? He is left to pray and hope that the gates of Eden are not locked forever.

But how to overcome his weakness? How to unite his life—while still living—with the ideal? No answer!

How to become disciplined enough to overcome the temptations of the hell, to which his weakness seems to condemn him? Still no answer!

It is but human to break rules, when they are forced upon us in the form of restrictions and prohibitions. It is seen everywhere. When the law against alcohol was enforced upon the American society, statistics show that never had there been more alcohol in circulation. If a child is beaten to behave nicely to the younger, he will in his turn give it on to someone else—more likely to his younger sister or brother.

I think this clearly shows the results of prohibition. More sins, more restrictions, more sins. By only putting up prohibitions, by only telling us what not to do, we are sure to do it—first thing in the morning. Thereby committing a sin adding only to our negative approach to the problems of life—which to begin with was the meaning of the principles of Christianity.

Now they don't give us any hint of what to do—they don't give the slightest suggestion of how to evolve into that state where the principles of God are followed by heart.

What could have been a blooming openness towards a life of simple righteousness has become a closed-up jail of fear and supposition. Discipline has become a matter of sinning in secret, while keeping a suspicious eye on your neighbour. I believe that this negativated approach to life is much deeper rooted in our hearts than we normally think.

Our society has developed so far away from any idea of God or the inner, that we have become a society of material approach only. Our lives are centred around material things. They seem to be our only end, and serve as measurement of our human quality also. The more things we are able to gather round us, the more thoughts we are able to entertain, the more money we are able to put in our own pocket, the greater we are.

But this life in the world of materiality also requires its own strange discipline. In fact, most of the discipline we are taught only aims at turning us into smooth gear-wheels of the great thing-producing machinery.

In school we are beaten to top marks, struggling from there under the whip to get the best education, the best position in life, the top salary, the most power. All the way we are haunted by the fear of failure: "If you don't do your homework, you will fail." "If you are late in the morning, you will lose your job." "If you don't cling to your riches, you will become poor."

No doubt, a life under such conditions has turned us into nations of disciplined individuals—seemingly disciplined—because whom of us will not do anything to avoid the whip of failure?

Yes, we are indeed alive to duty and discipline, working like horses, getting our trains to leave on time, getting them to go faster, so we can save time. Because time is money—as they say. Yes, we are among the worlds most disciplined money-makers.

But if someone should have the guts to pat us on the shoulder, whispering in our ears, "But what about your life?" I am sure that most of us will only snarl, brushing him off—maybe even refusing that we have a life at all—in the hurry to keep up with the demands of the world. But we have a life and nobody—however disciplined he is—can refuse that.

And life, I believe, is given to us only to make us able to fulfil Nature's purpose with life in us. To bring us again to a state of balance and harmony with that which created us. Because, in our hunt after fulfilment of desires and wants, our lives are turned outward, while Nature has her own inner purpose with us. Conflict is the result. So much trouble, so many depressions, so many problems going on around us and inside us.

So let us turn our sight a bit inwards.

If one carefully reads the *Commentary on Ten Maxims*, written by our Master, one will find one great quality running through them all. They are all positive—pregnant with positive approaches to the problems of life. The problems we must all sooner or later face, in order to fulfil Nature's purpose with us. They give positive suggestions. He does not write, "Don't get up late in the morning for your meditation." He simply writes, "Rise before dawn." And goes into explaining all the benefit we can have if we do so. He does not warn us against any hell if we don't. It is left to us to do and feel.

When we are able—as we go on developing by his inner powers—to follow all the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg, we will end up as truly disciplined human beings. We will become like Master himself—a truly disciplined man. Because the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg are certainly meant for bringing about discipline.

So we must somehow come to understand that discipline is both needed and necessary, if we are to become like him.

It is easy to understand that we react much against discipline. Because discipline has become synonymous with the negative ways in which it has so far been forced upon us by authorities, who themselves are far from being disciplined—filled with the same negativity which they now pour on us. Whenever we so far have approached ways of discipline with an open heart, our eyes have been met with a wall of restrictions, rules and prohibitions—hiding from our view the discipline behind it, which we need. No wonder that some of us have come to hate the very word 'discipline.'

Yet somehow we ended up in front of the Master. What is it that we have come to love so much in him? To make the answer short, we might say that it is his state of naturalness, his oneness with Nature. Now, if we begin to long for a similar state, the question, "How did he come to such a state?" jumps from our lips.

The answer could be, that he has become thoroughly disciplined. Now living that life of discipline by heart, which we sit and adore.

Once we have come so far, it is easy to understand that we have to rearrange our ideas of discipline. It is really we who have to give up all ideas of rules and restrictions, which have come to form a wall between us and the mild disciplining effect of the Master's love.

I don't think I have ever heard the Master put up even one restriction on any of us. He has never prohibited anything—because in this context his only rule has always been, to make no rules. But yes, he has given his opinion when asked; he has given his own ideas of behaviour and conduct in life, if forced to do so by the asker. And yes, he has expressed his dislike of things he personally found wrong.

He called himself a free-thinker, and we are all free to think. To do, feel, and think, arriving at conclusions based on what we did and felt.

Do good, have good. Do wrong, have wrong. Follow him and go beyond. It is simple. If we simplify ourselves to become like Him.

And where there is freedom coupled with respect for others—their viewpoints and lives—as with Master, there can be no room for prohibitions, restrictions and rules.

This shows two things. That it might be us alone who bring these ideas into the Mission, and that Master's ways of discipline must follow some other lines.

I really think that it is we who put up rules and restrictions, because in our inability to grasp the Infinite, in our habit of clinging to the known—when, for once we are lucky enough to face the unknown—we tend to turn it into something limited, something known. It is we alone who apply ideas of right and wrong to the infinite existence of the Master—which is far beyond all of that.

With the world as a mirror, it is our narrow conception that puts up all restrictions, because we do not yet have the capacity to face a life as unknown to ourselves—which might be the only way to become one with **it**. One with Master.

Moreover, our education into the outward-turned material world, has made us seek fulfilment in a similar restricted way, where fulfilment of desires, and not of simple needs, seem to be the common rule. We are simply not educated to any idea of the inner. Our discipline is constructed to fulfil more or less reasonable demands in the outward world, making us feel our freedom restricted, robbed away, leaving us in a state where we cling to what we think is left of it when it comes to having our pleasures, wants and desires.

We feel that should we give up that freedom also, nothing remains but a life similar to that of an old toothless aunt. Yet we all know very well, that there must be some sort of discipline, there must be some sort of rules and ways. But as Nature herself has gone out of sight, we have lost any trace of it.

I think it must be a characteristic feature of Nature that she is always positive in her ways of bringing up. If you watch how the plants and trees are always able to find a way of growing, of surviving, even under the most difficult circumstances, it is easy to understand that Nature always seeks the best for her seeds. It is her purpose to bring out the best plant and make it better and better until it is perfect—nothing less than that. For this purpose she will throw out all which is a hindrance to her perfection of the plant, all which hurts the tiny seed. She might even change the inside structure of it, if that is needed. In this way Nature gradually evolves the seed into the plant it is meant to be.

She might form it, she might take out unwanted things from it, but I don't think Nature forces restrictions or prohibitions on it—because that would somehow mean that Nature would restrict nature from working—putting a bar to its own work. No, the changes that she sets in are only because it is necessary to make the seed into what it ought to be, to make it strong enough to become one day a blooming plant.

Nature does not suppress by rules and restrictions. It makes use of its controlling power only to protect the seed from everything that might harm or even kill it. Nature only wants the best for everyone. She supports the growth by introducing what is needed at every step.

To me it looks like a natural inner process which goes on by itself. It might be disturbed by so many factors from outside, but I think—and it might be worth noting—that once it has started, nothing can stop it at arriving at the desired result. Nothing! The growth might be stopped—maybe even for lives and generations—deserts might spread, but once the idea of growth has been introduced, it is only a matter of time before it will again spring forth. Nature is patient—she can wait!

Our Sahaj Marg system—the Natural Path—runs, as the name says, along such natural lines. Just as Nature wants the best for her seeds, so, does the Master want the best for his abhyasis. And above all, he wants to carry out the work entrusted to him by Nature in the best possible way. I think it must be obvious, that there can be no better way than the one which follows the rules and ways of Nature herself. Such a way and such a method we have in Sahaj Marg.

By his power the seed is introduced into the deepest core of our heart, marking the start of an inner spiritual growth. Here it all goes on. From the first tiny sign of inner evolution to the full blooming of the mature condition of the perfected being. Once it has started, nothing can stop it. We might drop it, we might be undisciplined, but it goes on and on, because, truly speaking, it is the nearest. Our own.

We must come to what we are meant to be. And just as Nature is positive in bringing up her seeds, Master is positive in bringing up his abhyasis. He urges us to have a positive approach, to think positively and act in positive ways. Ways that will bring benefit and fulfilment to our own. The Master is Nature's hand at work, for the benefit of us all.

To my mind, one of his greatest discoveries in the field of spirituality is the power of suggestion. The lighter the suggestion, the more powerful its effect. The lightest suggestion gives the lightest, most subtle result. And the goal being that we should become subtlest in order to become one with the subtlest, it is but natural and wonderful that he makes use of this remarkable discovery of his.

And this is why he never uses 'must' and 'don't' when he needs to direct and discipline us. Because the active power in a prohibition, in a rigid rule, is far too heavy for his purpose to bring us up to our goal. Furthermore, the suggestion given in such a prohibition is negative and for that reason not capable of pushing us on. It can at most make us slow down, if not stop, to oppose it.

Master never bothers what should not be done—by us, by himself or by anybody. He likes to form his direction in a positive way, showing what ought to be followed.

If asked whether meat-eating is allowed in the Mission, one of his typical answers was, "Vegetarian food is better for a spiritual purpose." Thus saying what to do, giving a very good reason why and leaving the problem of meat-eating out of the picture. Avoiding the risk of making us sinners by putting up a prohibition in front of us. Prohibitions and sinners we see more than enough—but the ways to overcome them are very rare.

Master's teachings, his transmission, his writings and his own living example are full of these subtle suggestions for the subtlest discipline.

As I said above, he is a thoroughly disciplined Being—the very fulfilment of Nature herself in the human form. As such he stands out as an example and proof, that we can also become like that.

So I believe, that the only discipline that the alert abhyasi needs, is to have that being in full view day and night—through the ups and downs of life—deriving from it exactly what he needs at every step of development to be disciplined enough to go on and on.

Importance of Morality

DORIT KRAUSE, MUNICH, GERMANY

IN 1977 MASTER GAVE A MESSAGE where he unambiguously stressed the importance of morality for us. I'll quote the passage:

> The basis of yoga has always been the right morals and proper behaviour. That is why my Master Samarth Guru Mahatma Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Fatehgarh (U.P.) has laid very great stress on this point. He always emphasised on cultivating principled character. The way of life should be pregnant with high morals. If it is not there, a person is not capable of having the fine type of spirituality, which is beyond everything, and worth having. Freedom we want but we don't know its definition.

It is true we want freedom. I think we all can agree on that. That is, in fact, one of the reasons why many of us have joined Sahaj Marg: because we want to be free from all that is limiting or burdening or bothering us. But I'm not so sure whether we can also all agree on wanting morality. Because for most people here in the West, morality is exactly the opposite of freedom. It takes away from us the freedom to do what we wish. It limits us. So in the West, people who want freedom are generally against morality.

We think, "Oh, morality, that's only important in worldly society, it is a narrow-minded Christian tradition. It does not apply to spiritual people who should be away from all narrow-mindedness."

And then we also could observe that morality is a relative matter. Because in almost every society, every civilisation, every historical epoch, the moral codes seem to be somewhat different. So we have the tendency to think that morality is nothing but a convention between certain people at a certain time. Since there are so many different conventions, which one shall we then use in yogic life, for having Master, and isn't he beyond all this?

The Latin word at the root of the word 'morality' (*mos, moris*) has many different meanings. On one hand it stands for custom, usage, ways and means, manners, civilisation, prescription, etc. All these words are denoting outer attitudes that can change.

Then there is the other category of meanings such as: will, way of thinking, character, condition. These ideas are describing the inner being, the inner condition, which as we all know can also change.

So morality refers to the outer and to the inner person. And through morality, both aspects should be moulded. That was exactly what our Western morality code was not able to accomplish. I think if people in the West freed themselves from the old moral tradition then it was because this Christian morality was, or had become, a matter of outer behaviour only, a code of do's and don'ts which often was used merely to tyrannise each other as intolerant, cold-hearted hypocrites. Having only the outer material aspect of life in mind, this morality was only a morality of the mind, not of the heart, only an outer make-up that had not much good influence on the inner condition.

And that became obvious especially after the moral revolution, because then people started to live out what they had inside. And we all know that when we look inside, the first things we meet are our own impressions, emotions, etc. So people in society exposed their inner attachments, their inner slavery, living it out. But that didn't make anybody happy, nor gave freedom, nor relief, nor bettered the situation in any way in spite of the psychoanalysts saying, "You must live it out, then you will be free from it." Nobody became free by living it out, because new samskaras were made.

A Chinese proverb says, "Every wish that has been fulfilled immediately gives birth to another one." And that's why Babuji tells us in his 1977 Message: "... Freedom we want but we don't know its definition." Referring to the fact that we abhyasis want freedom so that we can follow what our wishes and samskaras persuade us to do. But that is not freedom; that is exactly slavery. We must seek the freedom in being away from samskaras, away from tendencies, and if we don't seek our freedom there, we seek it in the wrong place.

But this experience—that one cannot get rid of something by walking into it—gave us all the yearning to go out of it. And so we came to spirituality, we came to Master: "You please pull us out of our addictions and chaotic lives! Please make order in us!" And Master's answer is, just turn your head and look to the other side, the Divine.

Thus, we got a real goal, and a practicable method, and a Master whom we can love. And we practise and think that's all we have to do, it's enough to free us. But I think it is not enough, because if at the same time we continue to follow this concept of individual moral freedom, we go on repeating our tendencies. And, furthermore, moral freedom gives us the idea that fulfilling our desires is possible. Which makes us think about them much more than if we knew right from the start that there is no chance in having them fulfilled at all. Therefore, we are remaining attached to these wishes and consequently are continuously subject to frustrations and worries. We are not resigning, we are struggling to the last breath to get what we want, and that is mostly not only spiritual things.

And so we are on one hand keeping ourselves entangled in attachments, while on the other hand we make efforts in meditation to get out of them. And that is not giving a very dynamic progress. But we can tell ourselves, "If I do the wrong thing then it will give me a cleaning, so it's also all right, I don't have to worry since I'm with Master." And when we then reach the feet of the Master, leaving all our daily life behind for awhile, then we find that we are full after just a few days! Because it should have been exactly in that daily life back home where we should have made the room in us so that Master can fill in a lot of himself, of his divine energy.

Now what do we get this divine energy for? Of course we are getting it precisely for leaving our entanglements, such as worries and pleasures, behind; we get it to dissolve our tendencies so that we can finally move speedily towards God. If Master is therefore only able to give us a little of his energy, we are just like a big car with only few drops of petrol; we are not getting very far. But there Master's help comes in, as we know. He removes as much of our inner attachments or grossness as is possible at the time thus making room in us for giving us more of his energy.

We are thankful, and return home wanting to make the best use of this divine energy. And that would be of course to reinvest it in our further progress. But at home we have again to deal with the life we have created for ourselves. Now, if this life is quite clean and simple, then not much energy is needed to manage it, so that almost all the energy can flow into our spiritual progress. But if we have a lot of complexities there, like problems, desires, fears, then we almost automatically use that energy given to us for going through these desires, going into our problems, and almost nothing is left for spirituality. The daily abhyas also becomes flat and superficial, and constant remembrance cannot reign in us. Which means we are continuously denying ourselves Master's full support because we are not open for it.

And we go on being unhappy about our lives, because we feel inside that the purpose of life is not enjoyment, nor worries, but progress. I mean to say that in spite of Master's support in this system we cannot get the real benefit if we are not also co-operating with the Master by moulding our lives so that they won't be a barrier to Divinity. Just as Master has said, we must fly with both the wings equally glittering: the spiritual wing and the material wing. And with a bright material wing, he, I guess, didn't mean that we should be rich and famous, but he maybe thought that the material life must be in order, must be well-functioning, must be pure and simple, if we want to be pure and simple, or spiritual, inside also.

Therefore, the question how to co-operate with Master in our daily life is very important for us. How to think, decide, behave, live in such a way that our development from animal man to human man, to a divine human being, as Master describes it, becomes possible and easy?

I believe that's exactly what our morality in Sahaj Marg should be about. And so we can easily see why Master writes that without morality "we cannot get the fine type of spirituality which is beyond everything and worth having."

But what is this morality we should practise in Sahaj Marg? How does it look like in daily life? If we empty the idea of morality of all our personal experiences with it and subsequent projections about it, what remains then? Do we at all know what morality is? How can we adopt morality in order to reach higher spiritual stages if we will probably only know what morality is once we have reached these stages? Isn't that paradox? Just like when Chariji is saying in some speech in Malaysia that we should start with the end! Start having the goal in view, start with surrender, then everything comes. But starting with the end is possible because we have everything inside us. Otherwise the whole process of meditation, of going inside ourselves to realise God would be useless, if He wasn't there already.

So this indicates also that we all have the sense of morality inside. And indicates this real morality inside is a universal thing, not an individual one. It is only our individual samskaras that make it individual. So every one of us should in fact be able to develop a surer sense of morality inside himself if only he started looking for it. And the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg are a help Master has given us to develop the inner certainty.

For becoming spiritual we practise yoga. And yoga means union, union with the divine Master. When we want union with somebody, we have to make ourselves so attractive that the other on his side also wants union with us. So if Master calls morality the basis of yoga, then we must understand morality is an essential element in attracting him. And how we should be to attract him he has told us himself by describing what our inner condition should be like. And so our outer behaviour must correspond to this.

But we cannot do it, because rarely our inner condition is so fine. But we must not bother about it. In Sahaj Marg we don't have to solve our problems, because they get dissolved by the Master with time. So if Sahaj Marg is worth what it is claiming, all we have to do is practise and wait. But there is a backside to this waiting. It requires self-discipline. While waiting for freedom we shall not strengthen our bondage, nor create new attachments, but keep the attention on the Divine. If we try this in daily life then we are morally co-operating with the Master.

In Sahaj Marg we are not asked to adopt an outer behaviour. We meditate on divine light in the heart, purifying the heart thereby. And our thoughts, feelings and actions should then not overshadow that light in the heart. For every action has its reflection: A 'good' action will be light to the heart. A 'bad' action is something that casts a shadow in the heart, and creates heaviness. That's maybe also a way to discriminate between good and bad, because in spirituality anything which spoils the purity in the heart is bad. So even attachment to 'good' things as such is bad if it spoils the purity in the heart. And on the other hand we could theoretically do something that is commonly considered to be bad, if it doesn't spoil the heart, and doesn't make an impression. Babuji once said one could even murder a man if one could do it without getting an impression from it. But that it simply was not possible.

So Babuji once told me, "Not to hurt others is the greatest religion." Because if we hurt somebody, if we hurt his feelings and find out about it, we immediately feel the pain we have caused in the heart of the other person and have to suffer. Also if we steal or betray, we get back the pain we have thereby created for the other person, and our own heart is thereby overshadowed, burdened. The heart feels what it has done and has to suffer.

So in fact morality simply helps us to avoid hurting ourselves, to avoid blocking our own way of progress, our way to freedom. Morality tells us to stay away from these things that are in contradiction to this infinite, free, unalloyed purity we hope to achieve by getting rid of our samskaras. And by keeping out of entanglements, avoiding attachments, we also practise moderation. By not giving priority to desires, we also learn to open up to the idea of duty.

So in morality we give priority to the light in the heart. Which means practically that we must ask ourselves, how would Master deal with the situation? What would he say? And then feel the reaction in the heart.

Still in a more general way, a Christian saint called Augustinus has said, "Love and do what you like!" Apparently this sounds like complete liberty: if we love something we may also do it. But since it was a saint who said so, he of course meant a love without personal wishes, without desires, without the spirit of conquest or self-aggrandisement, a love which is beyond the self, which is universal—Divine love, in short. And for us, 'love' means Master, and 'do what you like' means follow **that** heart.

I guess only if we can love selflessly, only if we have Master's heart in us, we can see what everybody really needs, what is good in different situations and not, accordingly. So I believe a real moral person feels, thinks, acts only that which is to the real advantage of others, leaving his own life up to his

Divine Master, thus living a life of divinity. Or, as Saint Kabir expresses it in some verse, "He who has found both love and renunciation shall never die."

Discipline—Its Need

MICHEL TOURNAIRE, PARIS, FRANCE

AS SOON AS a person pronounces the word 'discipline,' it is interesting to notice that mostly all people become afraid, thinking immediately that if they have to follow a discipline they will lose their freedom. In a way they are right.

Coming from the Latin language, discipline meant, for the ancients, to receive rules from a teacher, to learn morals and ethics. The students were called disciples and they had to follow the teaching of the philosopher. So you see, it is always very important to define the meaning of a word before we speak about it.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the word discipline is mostly used in the army, and less and less at school. Also discipline is used to designate teachings in sport, music, dance, etc. Unfortunately it seems today that discipline has become a very old-fashioned word, especially in the Occident.

We are here gathered together to celebrate the Birth Anniversary of our beloved Master Babuji. Every abhyasi who joined the Mission himself made the choice to learn a new philosophy of life, the philosophy of Raja Yoga.

This philosophy is among all disciplines the highest one. The Sahaj Marg brought to humanity by Lalaji and Babuji is the highest gift human beings ever received. Sahaj Marg is the 'easy way' of realisation of God in one life.

We are all of us his disciples, and we must remember what he told us in his Delhi message on the 30th of April, 1980:

In my opinion the civilisations of the East and the West have very little difference. Here we try to use the **inner** for the inner vision, whereas they use themselves for the inner vision. Spirituality is not the monopoly of Indians only, but it is the birthright of everybody. I have a strong desire that our associates in different parts of the world may not have to look towards us for their spiritual benefit. So I say that I do not make disciples but masters.

To reach this stage of becoming masters of our future, the easiest way is to follow the discipline that Babuji gave to us: "One goal, one Master, one method." The goal is the Divine, the Master is our goal in our human life, and the method is very easy: meditation, cleaning, prayer.

If we follow this discipline of Sahaj Marg and the Ten Maxims, we offer the best present to our Master for his birthday. We must be conscious that without following this discipline, we will never reach the goal, but only lose the ocean.

When we started Sahaj Marg, our desire was to change. After a while we noticed that the real and deep change was only possible by following the discipline.

If we take the example of a swimmer who is preparing himself for the Olympic Games, we see that he has to follow very precisely a strenuous program of training ordered by his teacher. He has to train many hours a day, sometimes six or eight; he has to be careful with the food; he has to sleep a lot; he cannot go out for amusements. He has no freedom! The trainer gives him advice and he has to respect the rules. And the swimmer has to do all these things by himself. Why does the swimmer accept to follow this program? Because he wants to win during the competitions, to be able to stand on the first step of the stage. He wants to win, but he is not sure whether he will succeed. He is not sure if all the years he worked very hard to reach his goal, if these years of strenuous discipline, have been useful.

Now if we take our example in Sahaj Marg, the notion of competition doesn't exist as we are growing 'towards infinity.'

And the big difference between the sportsman and an abhyasi, is that our Master does everything for us as soon as we accept to follow his discipline, to 'bring us to His level.'

What do we notice? We notice that our Master only wants to help us to grow so that we can reach the goal. The discipline he expects from us is only for our benefit and not for his. So why should we be afraid when Master asks us for more discipline? The reason is very simple. It is because "we are yet but slaves of wishes, putting bar to our advancement." The only way to escape from our tendencies, the result of our samskaras, is to follow carefully the discipline of Sahaj Marg.

In *Truth Eternal*, Babuji drew the following portrait of his Master Lalaji:

> A great lover of humanity, he often used things given to him with love in spite of his own dislike for those things. He hated flattery, and though he loved his followers with all their faults, he was at the same time, a strong disciplinarian. The discipline corrects the baseness of worldly passion, fortifies the heart with virtuous principles, enlightens the mind with useful knowledge and furnishes enjoyment from within itself. Hence Lalaji never failed to enforce stern discipline with love...
>
> He taught, 'Never offer advice unless invited; otherwise it is likely to yield bad results. If you find any fault with anybody, pray for his freedom from it.' He himself never directly asked anyone to give up any bad habit. All such bad habits and afflictions left that person in no time after he had been with him. Commenting on his method he used to say, 'If you sit by a fire, you feel warm; if you sit by ice, you feel cold. Why then will you not get transformed if you sit with a person who is perfect in discipline and etiquette?' ... He was very firm in his conviction that the real discipline and etiquette were simply that the tongue should utter only that which was in one's heart. The inner and outer condition of an abhyasi had to be the same.

Our Master Babuji was not different: He had exactly the same idea of discipline as his Master. Parthasarathiji mentioned in his book, *My Master*, what Babuji told him one day:

> In spirituality, obedience is the highest virtue. When a person surrenders to a Master, it means he has surrendered completely in all

ways. He has become merely an instrument in the Master's hand. How can such a person even try to decide what is right or wrong? Here obedience alone is correct. There are various levels of existence, and duty is different from level to level. The soldier obeys the captain's orders; but in ordering his troops the captain in turn is only obeying the order of his immediate superior officer—and this goes on up the scale of authority. In spiritual work there is no question of personal preferences or of personal opinions. The Master guides us in all ways. And if Nature wants destruction, it has to be carried out. We are merely instruments. If one instrument turns out to be blunt and useless, the craftsman will throw it away and take up a better one. You understand this idea?

So obedience is the highest virtue. After all Master, who works for Nature and carries out the orders from above, knows what is to be done.

With the grace of our beloved Master Babuji, we are gathered together in this village he chose for us, around our brother Parthasarathi. Our brother Parthasarathi follows (and accepts) the discipline taught by Lalaji and Babuji as he is the 'new flame of the Mission.' Hence Parthasarathi cannot fail to enforce stern discipline with love.

Transformation—The Way to Freedom

MIREILLE HUMBERT, HYERES, FRANCE

I MUST START by expressing my gratefulness. Ever since I started Sahaj Marg, I have been grateful. Grateful to the Master, because, at last, I had found the one who would give me freedom, and from the very beginning I felt and I knew that the means for this freedom was transformation. The very first day Master starts working on us, this very first day transformation begins, and we begin to progress towards freedom.

What freedom? For me freedom means to be free from myself. Because I know very well that, when 'I' do, 'I' think, 'I' feel, 'I' decide, I am not free. I do, think, decide according to what my unconscious compulsions, desires, tendencies, or, to say it in spiritual terms, my samskaras, compel me to do or make me do. I am not free, I have known that for a long time, and my prayer has been, "Please, God, deliver me from myself!" And then, I met Master, and Master is transforming us, getting us rid of these samskaras that make us have such tendencies.

I have always been fighting against my tendencies, and recently, I asked our beloved Parthasarathi, "Will the Master remove our unwanted tendencies?" He answered, "They have already been removed."

They have already been removed! You see, I am free and I do not know it! I am going on acting as if I was my old self, while Master has transformed me, and I am not even aware of it! Yes, we all experience some change, but not at all, I am sure, to the extent of the transformation that has really taken place.

That is why, dear brothers and sisters, I wanted to speak about transformation. Master is doing on us a tremendous, a marvellous work of transformation. But, most of the time, we are not even aware of it and we stick to old habits because we are used to them. We are not asked, in Sahaj Marg, to renounce anything, but the least we can do is to co-operate, and this co-operation means becoming aware of the inner transformation, accepting it, letting it reveal itself in the change in our behaviour, habits, way of life, morality, and also in our acceptance of discipline. And I will quote Parthasarathi in a letter he wrote last December to one of our sister preceptors:

> It is true that in Sahaj Marg there is no question of renouncing, because we believe that if the abhyasi is sincere, the unwanted things will fall off themselves. This is what my Master has taught me. But this is true only if we co-operate with the Master, and try to act as an abhyasi should act, and not insist on wilfully doing what we have been doing all along, in the name of freedom, or something like that. The idea of discipline is this, that we are willing to let things fall off when the time comes for it, but, unfortunately, we insist on holding on to the things even when they wish to fall off themselves.

Yes, let us co-operate with the Master; let us accept to be thoroughly transformed; let us accept to be completely moulded in the way Master wants us to be; let us accept Master's discipline. Then we will find real freedom, freedom from ourselves and, as Parthasarathi wrote himself in *My Master*, we will receive the divine gift of the real freedom: "freedom from freedom itself!"

Discipline

FAUSTO RUSSO, AOSTA, ITALY

I HAD THE IMMENSE FORTUNE to see our great Master for the first time in Rome in June, 1976. At that time I was in the army in the city of Naples and I had a very short leave to go and see Master. It is impossible for me to describe those blessed days, I can only say that the time of leaving him to go back to Naples came very soon.

Three things I will ever remember of my departure: the tears that I was not able to check, his eyes, his words. Master told me, "Military service is good for discipline."

In the whirling of emotions of that moment and of the following days I was not able to understand the meaning of those words. I thought to myself "I want to stay with him, what do I care about discipline?" It is only now, after nine years, that those words begin to appear to me in their precious and deep meaning.

Discipline, both in the material and in the spiritual life, develops almost all the positive attitudes of the human being. These attitudes allow the individual to grow fully in all his spheres of existence.

Discipline teaches us sacrifice. "Nothing is gained without sacrifice," I was once told by an Indian senior preceptor.

Discipline teaches us to bear the difficulties of life and these, big or small as they may be, are ever present in the human existence.

A disciplined life makes our will stronger, because the will of the Master penetrates deeply into our heart.

Discipline throws out laziness and helps us to think in a positive way, to act with energy, with fairness and balance. Consequently we acquire inner concentration that helps us to feel the vibrating silence of the Absolute.

When this base is built, 'when the way is paved,' a great confidence comes to us, a confidence which helps us to face bigger trials.

From discipline I see also appearing the end of desires, the rising of moderation, morality, non-attachment and finally the rising of surrender to the Infinite Master.

Discipline brings calmness, inside and outside order, energy, certainty, faith, and therefore the capacity to see clearly within us, to solve our problems and to help others to solve their own problems.

Discipline enables us to perform our duty firmly in all the fields of activity, thus helping us to lay the stones of spiritual regeneration and true harmony among people.

This kind of discipline does not arise and cannot possibly arise through forced means such as useless mortification or asceticism, but only from a desire burning in the deepest core of the heart to become completely His.

Thanks to You All

MARI-ANN JOHNSSON, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

Thanks to you all because we are together, and first of all, thanks to our beloved Master who is the cause of our gathering today.

I am full of wonder and so happy that we are together as his beloved ones. How can we ever deserve his attention like that? Only by his grace, and it is of utmost importance to be obedient to the Master. Obeying Master means setting yourself aside and listening to the heart. When you become silent, Master will speak.

Our great Master has the power to transform anybody into anything, and Master has found the person containing all possibilities for this divine work. This person is here with us today. After a long time he has come to Europe to be with us.

My dear beloved Master, please receive our welcoming of you. We are celebrating today Babuji's 86th Birth Anniversary, and we are celebrating the occasion of your very first visit to Europe as our Master.

Please accept that we put all our gratitude and love before you, because you are our Master. It has been destined and decided by him, with whom you are united, in whom you are merged. So there can be no question of separation between you two.

I pray for your mercy and help to guide us on the real path of Sahaj Marg so that we shall not go astray, but keep our goal in sight and able to reach it. Just like you became merged in Babuji, it is my innermost longing that your humble and imperfect abhyasis may also proceed towards merging with you. This is my prayer and this is my goal.

It is not possible for me to really express my gratitude to you because no words are sufficient. But I hope and pray that you will feel our love, faith and devotion growing stronger all the time for you and that you will return to India with satisfaction.

Please, let us see you in person many, many times in the future. We need you so much, and we are aware that your work is destined to continue Babuji's changing of the world situation in order to let peace and love rule in spiritual civilisations all over the world. With love we shall be obedient devotees to you, my beloved one.

Welcome for now and for always.

Reflections

After Chariji's departure, for some abhyasis of the Munich group it became a real desire to reflect upon the seminar in Vorauf and the spiritual meeting with Chariji. So, while I was still pondering about my report, I received the following contributions which mirror still a further spectrum of very deep inner experiences.

VERENA VON GAGERN

...I don't know when and how it happened. Chariji guided us a step closer towards a wonder, what the Divine might be, how Master is merged in it, and who Chariji himself is for us on the way towards it.

The authorisation of a person as a guide on the spiritual path can never be proved from outside, as much as the path itself and the goal remain colourless when we put them into words. Thus it couldn't have happened through words that we acknowledged Chariji and through him the greatness of the Master Ram Chandra. How did it happen?

In Vorauf and since then I have always tried to see Chariji's presence for us historically, because I am persuaded that our teachers are sent to us and that they do not raise themselves to that position arbitrarily at an accidental moment. Historical means thus 'in the succession' and 'in relation to the world's condition' and 'in relation to our concrete situation in the West of the world.' Through this process of thinking and through the direct experience of his effect in my heart, I was able to slowly approach this new appearance and to eventually know that I need him and that I trust this notion.

In a lecture a lady explained the question of the succession in the following simplified way: "Lalaji signified discipline, Ram Chandra signified love, Chariji signifies comprehension."

I liked this explanation, because my experience had been similar. Chariji helps me to understand the greatness of Master's love and thus his Divinity. He does this only partially through his capable rhetoric and through his philosophical talent, which bring to life Master's teachings. He does it mainly through his own love which he has developed, visible to us all, to his Master in growing perfection.

Often when I desire to awaken Master in me, I discover that I make him visible to me in return through his great love towards his Master, Lalaji. Through the thought, "how much he loves his Master," he becomes real to me.

With Chariji it happened accordingly: in perceiving his love towards his Master, my perception of him was growing in me, and also the understanding of the ways of the Divine. 'In relation to the condition of the world' and more concrete, 'in relation to us.' I understood the succession more the better I learned to know Chariji, simply because of the fact that he owns capacities which allow him to understand us on many levels and to protect us against ourselves. Let's call it 'the intellectual component.' which we cannot totally ignore.

By knowing our social, economic, political and ecological conditions, he can defend, with more power of persuasion, the direction of spiritual development from 'high to low' against our still rational pushes of thinking. To me at least it happens again and again that I assume the line of development of change from low to high, under to upper, from the detail to the general, from material towards spiritual.

Chariji has told me very clearly, changes are starting from above or from inside, radiating their effects only secondarily on other zones. This is the only way of functioning of spiritual change, i.e., real change. Many of my questions have thus been answered indirectly. Chariji's responses always offered but the frame, within which I felt provoked to help myself. Chariji has opened my eyes to the rules of the question-answer game, just as Master had done in Shahjahanpur.

I would like to share with somebody the deep and immediate joy which I experienced when Chariji was announced to us as Master's successor. I know this was not a sentimental confidence, it happened after meditation: the news came wrapped in a stream of transmission ...

ROLF MÜLLER

... During one of the morning meditations, a feeling shot through me that I had been allowed to experience a few times before—namely whenever a farewell from my Master was nearing. Somehow a feeling of approaching separation, of pain, of unexpressed gratitude and love, surged out of my heart with such intensity and without premonition that I felt almost paralysed.

However, in Vorauf, there was no farewell to my Master Shri Ram Chandra. But rather the time had come to say farewell to his representative, P. Rajagopalachari.

I have known Chariji for nine years and he has always been a friend and brother to me, to whom I said hello and goodbye, as I did with other abhyasi friends.

And now I found myself sitting there and having the same feeling as I had so often in Shahjahanpur—shortly before my departure, shortly before leaving behind my Master.

I suddenly realised that everything which connected me with Ram Chandra, had passed over to Chariji, not in a way that Ram Chandra ceased to exist for me, but rather that whenever I think of him, I can feel Chariji between him and me—not as something covering, but as a big open gate... a gate through which I will proceed—on my path to Him.

BRIGITTE SMITH

At first all the preparational work for the approaching seminar covered the inner sight, the personal sight.

There was the joy to see Chariji and Sulochana again, the expectancy to see all the sisters and brothers from abroad again, yet slowly a great sadness crept into me, saying, “It will be the first time without Master, without the Beloved we gather—how can it possibly be?”

When Chariji arrived, the clarity and clearness of his atmosphere, his words, his eyes, were reassuring me. The great aloneness behind his serious, jovial presence, released me. “Also for him, it will be without his Master—our love for Him unites us.”

The days of the seminar started and continued, disciplined and ordered. The weather forced us to be concentrated on the inner landscape, since the outer one was in wind, hail, rain or snow.

The seminar began to come alive from within. The talks and speeches were just framework; heart-warming reunions with sisters and brothers were but lovely decorations in comparison to what was really happening. The explanations of questions were enlightening or reassuring, but that was not what really made the movement, the aliveness. There came a wonderful, strong and golden consolation in a great silence from within: “The path goes on, the work goes on.” This indescribable joy could live again! Master was indeed with us and gave me, in my experience, the wonderful gift, “Here is my son, who will help you come to me.”

Though Master is inside of us, still so much guidance is needed, and guidance has to be **done**.

In this movement in the seminar, I experienced how Master, in Chariji, was indeed ‘doing’—lifting, guiding and loving.

The preciseness in which he explained Master’s words, was crystalline and most helpful. I understood inside of myself, that he stands up for all he does before his Master and before Him alone and nobody else. However it might appear to the world, it all is of no avail—important for him is his Master and that is the whole world for him and nothing else. And since his Master is also my Master and is for me my whole world, I am joyous and trusting and will walk in confidence to be helped to come to Him, the Beloved.

The sweet and sharp longing-pain for Master did not stop, no, with Chariji's guiding help it increased—my vehicle to continue on and on, if I am to be blessed to do so.

GERTIE PÜTTER

Some months ago I used to think sometimes, how simple and how fortunate the situation must have been for those of our sisters and brothers, who did the first step in the field of spirituality with the one Master and who took the last breath still with the image of this same one Master in their hearts.

For all those of us now confronted with the exchange of the physical appearance of the Master and confused, even though we accepted the succession without any doubt—what could this mean to us now in terms of challenge or chance?

Studying our present situation carefully, we now have got the special opportunity to aim at one and the same state beyond by way of two perspectives. Thereby we realise the Divine itself all the more simply.

When we look at an unknown object through two differently coloured lenses successively, we grasp more easily what has remained unchanged: the essence of the object itself.

One night in our childhood we started to discover the moon. We had to wait several days until we were able to realise its round shape. To omit further more detailed astronomic consideration: how easily we could have perceived its actual appearance if it had been lit by two suns, even if placed very close to each other.

For a while this image pleased me. But in the meantime I do not want to dwell any longer in the imagination of a vague polarity. The human figure of our Master is the gate through which we have to walk. And we ought to proceed unceasingly. Why do I keep contemplating the idea of the frame? The essential is without quality. It continues to be found beyond, in the centre. I am longing to be there and I do not perceive of any obstacle—not now and not then. In the opposite, do we have the least comprehension to which extent we are supported by divine grace?

Seminar in
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

MAY 24–27, 1985

Introduction

CHRISTINE PRISLAND, BURNABY, B.C., CANADA

BABUJI'S NORTH AMERICAN 86th Birth Anniversary Celebrations were held in Vancouver, B.C., from May 24th to 27th, 1985, in the presence of the President and Master's spiritual representative, Parthasarathi, and his wife, Sulochana.

As seems to be usual with such functions, obstacles first had to be overcome. With the Vancouver meet, it was the United Airlines pilots' strike that immobilised many of the participants in their home cities, and caused Parthasarathi's party to be one day late arriving in Vancouver. However, most people arrived by managing to change plane reservations at the last minute.

Participants stayed at the Vancouver Hostel and also took meals there. It was a short ten-minute walk to the Lawrence Hall auditorium at the Justice Institute where the programme itself took place. This area of Vancouver is very beautiful—only one block from Jericho Beach and surrounded by parkland. The sun also shone on us the whole three days, making the short walk very pleasant indeed.

Approximately eighty to ninety abhyasis attended—coming from France, Germany, India, as well as the USA and Canada. This was the first international gathering held in North America, and we were grateful that Parthasarathi and Sulochana and so many of our brothers and sisters were able to travel to this far-away corner of the world.

On the Saturday and Sunday mornings, abhyasis gave many inspiring talks—Master is making eloquent speakers out of us, as none of the talks were prepared. "Spontaneous is best," as Parthasarathi has told us many times.

Saturday afternoon, the USA General Meeting was held. Among the many things decided was a date for future USA annual gatherings. This will be the first weekend in October, and the 1986 gathering will take place in New York, to which all abhyasis are invited.

Parthasarathi spoke of the need to ensure that the organisation retains spirituality as its primary concern. He recalled Babuji's wishes that the Mission be registered in the USA, and that it is important to remain organised, for the other thing, i.e., disorganisation, cannot exist. He said that discipline was essential for proper functioning of the organisation, so compliance with government regulations was not to be taken lightly. He told us how external controls have filled our lives, giving us more time and freedom; however, it was control at the internal level that is spirituality. Our future must be built on the want for freedom of action, not on the want for freedom of choice. Decisions made are not to be a matter of choice.

On Sunday afternoon, a preceptors' meeting was held, with twenty-seven preceptors present. Parthasarathi mentioned three important attributes that preceptors must have: a strong will, attentiveness to the work, and the idea that we are serving the Master, not humanity. He said that we have no need to worry about results since it is the work that is our duty. We should never doubt our capacity, since it is Master's capacity, not ours.

On the Sunday evening, after group meditation, a musical programme was heard—begun by Sulochana Parthasarathi, who sang two *bhajans*. Parthasarathi told us the first *bhajan* was one of Lalaji's favourites and used to bring tears to Babuji's eyes when he heard it. It has affected us this way also and all present were very moved by the love conveyed by Sister's singing, even though we could not understand the words! This was followed by a song from Laurie MacDonald of California and some Bach selections played by Janet Packer on violin.

On the last morning we gathered in the Hostel Common Room and it quickly became uncommonly charged with Master's grace! We had the last sitting of the celebrations and Parthasarathi gave the most inspirational talk of the celebrations. He discussed how we can best develop that universal love that Babuji displayed so naturally and talked about so often. As was so often the case when we tried to record Babuji, there was but one tape recorder present which taped only the last half of this talk, and was not working properly for all that! Thereby leaving the only record of this divine display in our hearts.

Each large gathering that we attend brings us ever closer to the goal. The inspirational talks, and basking in the presence of a living Master, brings home to us the fact that today is the day which we will, only if we **will**, manifest that same universal love He is the source of.

We left the celebrations with a clearer conception of what the real service in Sahaj Marg is all about, and a new-found ability to especially fulfil Maxim Six: "To know all people as brethren and treat them as such."

A Crisis—The Solution

WILLIAM WAYCOTT, PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA USA

RECENTLY, while listening to the radio, I heard an interview with an overseas visitor to this country. The questioner asked him his opinion of our people's commitment to freedom and human rights. The visitor responded that personal commitment to change must reach the stage of crisis before one would become motivated enough to do something about it. Only when a situation has deteriorated to the point that emergency action is necessary, he said, would there be sufficient motivation to respond.

My thoughts immediately turned to the concept of crisis and what it means to me. What does it take to become motivated and to want to change? What is required to elicit that critical amount of concern in me that pushes me over the threshold of complacency into a newly rekindled effort to change? According to our visitor, a crisis is necessary to spark my motivation, and to him I would say that for me it is not enough.

Nowadays, from my viewpoint, I find life and all the things that existence is, to be quite overwhelming. Each day seems to dawn saying, "Do this, do that. You cannot rest until it is all completed." I reply, saying, "Whatever needs doing I shall try my best to do. I try, knowing that it is done for my Lord and Master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj. With what tools he has given I make the effort to serve him with love and devotion."

After a brief rest, the next day comes saying, "Get going, perform, you have a great distance to go before you sleep. Don't waste time, the hours are passing." Feeling overwhelmed, I step out once more onto the battlefield called life, and wonder if existence will continue forever as it seems to me now, for it does appear endless.

From within, the heart gives hints that true life (the life within life) is not this. Yet this often-tired soldier wonders what it takes to understand true life more intimately, to become it, in other words. The samskaras seem so resilient, so concretely part of me; they daily repeat like a broken phonograph record, playing the same thing over and over. I feel a prisoner to these impressions and find my only possible hope, the remedy for this self-imposed slavery, is Him. He remains within, my life in life.

A crisis most definitely exists. Since the day this soul took up residence in its body, the crisis was there. And, until this soul bathes in the infinite ocean of my Master's heart, the crisis continues. This fantastic existence called life with its intricate and complex web of torturous confinement, can only be solved in one way. A way which often seems to require the courage of ten thousand lions, the dedication of ten thousand craftsmen, and the devotion of ten thousand servants, just to name a few. And in this I am not alone. This auspicious existence belongs to each one of us. This crisis is a world-wide phenomenon affecting every living thing. I am surrounded by my brothers and sisters all waking each morning to face the same news, "Do your job in life, do not rest until the goal is achieved." We are all in this together; the crisis is here and now. Its solution awaits each of us, as it is for this purpose that we all have been born.

Returning to the interview of our country's visitor, I would wonder if our understanding is sufficient to comprehend the needs of this day. Clearly the chaos of life and its countless, daily crises are a sufficient message to humankind. How long must I remain enslaved to my past? Its ugly head constantly rears itself continuing confusion in this endless Maya. How long can this go on? I need you, dearest Babuji; thou art the real goal of human life.

Human and Divine

TOM WHITLAM, VANCOUVER, CANADA

MASTER HAS ALWAYS requested us to fly like a bird with two wings, one material and one spiritual in nature. It follows that the Master himself is a being with two sides, one material and one spiritual. It has been very important for me to see both of these sides of my Master and to realise fully that he is both pure divinity and pure humanity combined in one personality.

Why is it important to see the Master in both his aspects? If we see only his human side and think of him only as a human being like ourselves, we fail to see him as the source of Divinity in concentrated form. This Divinity, which is Himself, is available to us, and he is able to infuse himself by his will into the aspirant desiring the highest. We must see the absolute necessity of our connecting ourselves with him in order to obtain his divinity.

Conversely, if we see him as only divine in nature, we run the risk of being unable to see the possibility of our union with him in his ultimate condition. If our religious notions of the supposed distance between God and man are transferred to our perception of the Master as being only divine, how can we really believe in our hearts that we frail, incompetent, inconsistent human beings can become like him? Our will will be hampered, and we will not strive towards our goal as we should.

Both of these unbalanced attitudes are, in my opinion, the result of the ego protecting itself by refusing to admit the possibility of our mergence with the Divine. Because, in order for us to merge with the Divine, we must become like it. If we are only humans, how can we merge with what we perceive to be only Divinity? That which we merge with must not only be divine, but human, as we ourselves are. We must not only become divine in reality but we must become really human as well. He can only take us to that point if we recognise the goal and co-operate with him to achieve it. He is the goal, the Master is the goal, a living, breathing example of merged humanity and Divinity ever ready to help us up to his stage. But we think he is only a human being helping us towards God, or that he is only a god helping us human beings. Both ideas are wrong. Balance must be perceived in the Master before we can fix up our real goal, Himself, as something achievable by us.

In both of these cases of abhyasis professing a lopsided view of the Master, my own opinion is that they never really saw the Master at all. It was their imagination that gave them a view which they wished to see, having no basis in reality. He can only be seen in both his aspects, simultaneously, because in him both these things, his humanity and his divinity, are one. It is we who make the separation, and I must hasten to add, it is a necessary distinction for us to make, because until we have achieved that state, we must be able to discriminate between the material and the divine in order to guide ourselves towards him. When we are like him, then of course no distinction is necessary, or possible.

This lack of discrimination between the divine and human sides of the Master is perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of acceptance on the part of some abhyasis of his representative. The divinity of Babuji and of his representative is the same, their divine power is the same, their ability to use this divine power to effect our spiritual change is the same. The Divine can be only one.

The human personalities of people are necessarily different. Personality is rooted in the multiplicity of the material and astral bodies. Therefore, the personalities of the Master and his representative will be different as well. If we confuse the human side of the Master with his divinity we are liable to consider the difference between the personalities of the representative and the Master as an indication of a lack of divinity on the part of the representative. This can lead to our downfall.

I would like now to state a personal opinion of mine regarding the state of those abhyasis who became attached to Babuji during his lifetime. We are in danger. This danger has been stalking us from within ever since his passing and continues to do so. I believe in this danger because I have felt it in myself and seen it in others. What it is exactly I don't know, but I feel its effects and I believe it has to do with an imbalance in our perception of the Master now that Babuji is dead. Our perception of the humanity of the Master revolved around a physical body in Shahjahanpur, and rightly so. But that physical body having disappeared, we now have to rely on our memories of him to remind us of his humanity. This is a difficult task, as memory fades and it is also selective; we can play tricks on ourselves with memories of him. Our very attachment to his physical presence, so very necessary to our growth, is now perhaps a danger to us, unless it is at such a level that union with him is a fact rather than an expectation.

We have seen many abhyasis whom we would have called lovers of him abandoning the Mission and his representative. Perhaps it could be said that their love was not of the intensity required to overcome their own ego after his death, I don't know. I am more concerned with those who remain with us.

I have experienced, since my Master's death, many different states of unhappiness, from sorrow to despondency to bitter resolution. These conditions are of course things of my own making, but they have been sparked, I believe, by his physical demise. Master always said that during his lifetime we should make full use of his presence among us as it would be much more difficult for us to immolate in the dead flame, after his physical passing. This has been my experience. Those abhyasis who have attached themselves to Babuji in his lifetime, are now, in my opinion, at risk. We are in danger of losing sight of the Master by failing to see him before us in his balanced state of both humanity and divinity united.

People have always asked why I have gone to India so many times to see the Master when he himself has said that this system can be practised fully in all corners of the earth, in any language, at any distance. It is this need, I think, to see the Master in both his aspects, the human and the divine, that draws us to him, physically, time and again.

Master has graciously left his representative behind him to serve the future needs of suffering humanity. That he is of the same calibre as Babuji cannot be denied by those of us who continue to feel the work proceeding within us. The special personality must do his work through the agency of a physical form in this material world. The representative is his point of power in this world.

Why then do I say that those abhyasis who gave their hearts to Babuji are now in danger? If the representative is here, why will we not be equally well served by him as by Babuji? The problem is not in his ability to help us, it lies in our ability to co-operate with him. We must recognise the source of our change in order to co-operate with it.

The acceptance of a guru, with real surrender, is an occurrence which happens, in my opinion, only once in a lifetime; perhaps only once in a thousand lifetimes; perhaps only once. Otherwise, it is not really acceptance, it is not really surrender. If this acceptance and surrender has occurred, how is it possible for there to be any difficulty to the abhyasi on the physical death of the guru? Perhaps it is because there is a lag in time between surrender to the guru, and union with the guru. A period of short duration when compared to eternity, but of finite and uncertain dimension due to the variations of co-operation and capacity existing in individual abhyasis. During this period our attention can still be diverted from him by external circumstances such as his death. I am not sure of the reason why, but I feel the fact of the existence of the precipice.

Now Nature does not allow only one possibility in any situation. If there is the possibility of a great fall, there must also be the possibility of a great rise. In my opinion, this period in the lives of Babuji's devotees requires rapid change in them. In which direction this occurs is necessarily up to us.

How can we ensure that our direction is upwards and not downwards? I am not sure if in my case this is yet ensured or not. I can only say that I feel myself to be progressing and not retrogressing at this point in time. Perhaps the feeling of spiritual danger will be with me for the rest of my life, and is in fact a beneficial feeling, spurring us on to union with Him. I have, however, seen too many falls from grace recently to be complacent and my advice to you is to be concerned for your spiritual welfare as well.

The question remains: how to ensure our continued progress towards Him? What has changed? Only our ability to perceive his physical form, soaked in the divinity of his Master. If this lack of the Beloved's physical presence be at the root of the difficulties; if our limited ability to feel the co-existence of humanity and divinity in him is hampered by his physical absence, then here is where we should look for our solution.

For me it seems that the answer lies in my ability to feel him as resident in my heart, and in my ability to see him as resident in his representative. Both these things seem very important to me in the preservation and augmentation of my devotion to him. Perhaps the most necessary for me will be to see him as resident in his representative. Why? We must co-operate with our transformation, and his representative is the agent of that change within us. Also, in my opinion, it is necessary for us to feel that our actions and progress are under the direct scrutiny of the Master. I have heard a few sighs of relief being breathed after Master's death; whatever the real feelings of regret at his passing, there was perhaps also a notion that, "Now I am accountable to no living being for my actions!" on the part of some abhyasis. Whenever we went to visit Master there was always the idea that we should brush ourselves up spiritually because he would be judging our progress. Our existence revolved around our visits to him and we were spurred on to greater heights by the thought of his disappointment in, or appreciation of, our efforts. That he hardly ever overtly expressed his judgements, didn't matter. We could feel them and we knew that he made them.

For some reason judgement has fallen out of favour as a word in recent times. In my opinion it is essential for us spiritually that we have judgement, that we judge our condition and our progress, that we discern the condition of the Master, and that we feel ourselves to be judged by him in the meeting of his expectations for us. This aspect of our relationship with the Master can now only perhaps be fulfilled by his representative.

We may also feel that our obedience to the wishes of the Master is now also only subject to evaluation by ourselves. This is a dangerous idea, which perhaps puts us most at risk. Previously we could run to him to clarify his wishes, if we were confused, and he would give us the answers we were prepared to accept. Now if we feel ourselves as the only arbitrators of our obedience to him, we take on a heavy responsibility that can only be valid if he and he alone is so close to us as to enable us to communicate with him directly. Otherwise, here too, we must look to his representative, his physical location in this world, for aid and assistance. His representative should be seen as the voice of our Master, that directing conscience which, if we listen carefully for his subtle hints, is able to direct us towards himself, and away from our imaginative difficulties.

Our goal can be only one thing, unless we split our attention and hamper our progress. The physical and the spiritual point of our goal should also, in my opinion, coincide. If our goal is Babuji, and we have been able to reach that stage where Babuji's residence is truly in our hearts, then there is the co-incident point of the spiritual and material goal in this world, Himself. This is, however, a dangerous path to follow, because the ego can now trick us in all kinds of subtle ways, imagination can be very subtle in its tricks.

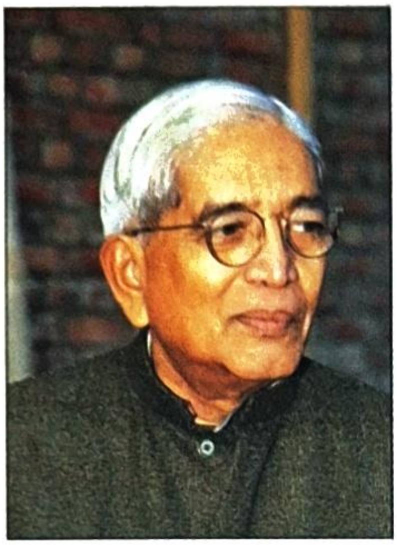
Many advanced abhyasis were hardly affected by Babuji's passing, because they had already come to this point of having him in their hearts as the locus of his physical and spiritual existence. But as we can see some of them are also in danger, because if there is not progress there will be retrogression. And where is progress to come from? The Master's special personality must use his powers from a physical body. Where is this body? I believe that the point of residence of his power is in his representative. Those of us who have found Babuji's point of residence to be in our hearts, need his representative desperately. We also all need to know that we need him desperately.

Master always said that as we progress we need the Master more. Well, I believe that there comes a point in the practice where having the Master's residence outside of one's heart becomes intolerable and we have to give him permanent residence there in our heart. If he also has a physical body it is easy for us to accept that while his residence is in our heart, he is also outside us, able to provide help so that his presence may grow in us. When his physical body dies we are in a dangerous situation; we still need that help desperately, but his body is no longer there to provide a point of residence in this world for his power. Therefore, the need for his representative, and the need for the recognition of his representative as the place of residence of his power, in order for us to co-operate with his agent of our continuing progress towards him.

The next generation of abhyasis of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission will have no difficulties as far as the coincidence of the physical and spiritual goal of their lives is concerned. The Master lives among us now, for the benefit of all who can direct their attention towards him. He is God's blessing to this world, now and forever. May he live long!

Our happiness is dependent on the depth of our mergence, in constant remembrance of our Beloved. Our goal must be one and one alone. We must become ever more aware of both His perfect divinity and perfect humanity until mergence is complete. We need his help to achieve our goal. This help can only be provided to us by his representative.

If we are the soil, the flower of our Beloved can only bloom if watered and tended by his representative. Let us co-operate with the Divine Gardener.



MORALITY & DISCIPLINE

> *The highest morality is exact utilisation of all the faculties that are given to us. And that means that whether it is the power of the mind or the power of the body or the power of spirit, the utilisation at all levels of existence has to be exact, and for the purpose for which they were bestowed upon us. And this principle Master has put very beautifully, that we don't use a crane to pick up a needle! ... I would finally say, morality is the utilisation of each energy for the purpose for which it was given to man, to be used exactly as it should be used: no waste, no indulgence.* **P. Rajagopalachari**

In 1985, Chariji, accompanied by his wife Sulochana, embarked on his first Western tour as the spiritual representative and President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. Travelling to centres in Europe, Canada and the USA, he further developed the strong base of spiritual work established by his Master, Babuji. It was a personal tour as Chariji stayed in abhyasis' homes and all had the opportunity to spend many hours with him. Two seminars were also held during this tour. The first was for seven days in Vorauf, near Munich, attended by 600 abhyasis. The second was a three-day seminar in Vancouver, with nearly 100 participants.

This book (which was originally published as *Proceedings of the Seminar on Sahaj Marg Held at Vorauf-Munich Germany, April 27th to May 4th 1985*) contains Master's lectures as well as a few given by abhyasis. Many of the talks focus on the need for morality and discipline, clarifying the necessity for these two important aspects of spiritual practice in Sahaj Marg.

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